

AT THE EDGES OF SLEEP

MOVING IMAGES AND SOMNOLENT SPECTATORS

Jean Ma

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Apichatpong Weerasethakul and the Turn to Sleep

The 2018 International Film Festival Rotterdam included among its programs a specially commissioned work by Apichatpong Weerasethakul that resists ready classification. *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, presented by the festival organizers as an "immersive one-off filmproject," cannot be described simply as a film or straightforwardly as an installation, despite having the characteristics of both categories. Its filmic component consisted of a found footage montage, compiled from the collections of the Netherlands' two largest film archives, the Eye Filmmuseum and the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision. Landscape imagery—of earthly terrain, sky, and bodies of water (in a nod to the maritime siting of the festival)—dominated the visuals. Accompanying the images was a dense soundtrack of natural ambient noises, such as the lapping of waves and the soughing of leaves stirred by wind. These sounds were created from field recordings made in Thailand by Apichatpong's frequent collaborator, the sound designer and artist Akritchalerm Kalayanamitr. The fragments of footage, which ranged from the earliest years of moving pictures to more recent aerial drone imagery, unreeled like a series of shifting views from a journey across places and periods, animated pages from an album of nature and history.

This found footage film, with a total length of twenty hours, was screened for several days, but not in one of the many commercial movie theaters in central Rotterdam dedicated to the festival. Rather, it was exhibited in a customized screening environment designed by Apichatpong and installed in a cavernous double-story hall inside the city's former Chamber of Commerce. The film was projected on a large, perfectly round screen hung at one end of the hall, in front of a wall of windows. At the opposite end of the hall was a balcony with rows of seats, approximating the arrangement of a conventional screening venue. In the ample space between them was an intricately interlocking platform on which eight beds were arranged at varying heights diagonal to the screen. These could



FIGURE 1. *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2018). International Film Festival Rotterdam. Photo by author.

be reserved on a nightly basis (for a fee of 75€) by those wishing to experience the entirety of the piece's duration. Each was equipped with a nightstand, a bed made up with fluffy pillows and duvets, and even slippers and toiletries for the occupants. Thus, in addition to being a film and an installation, the work also fit the description of "an actual, operational hotel."[1]

SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL's unusual exhibition architecture provided a springboard from which to launch a variety of modes of spectatorial engagement. For part of the running time, viewers could drop in and exit at will to take random dips into the stream of images, behaving as they might in a gallery or, considering the archival content of the projection, in a movie theater from an earlier historical era when films were commonly shown on a continuous loop. Or, taking a seat in one of the balcony rows at the rear of the hall, they could fall back on the comportment of a traditional moviegoer. At a certain point in the evening, however, the hall was closed to all except those with reserved bunks, thus setting a limit on this come-and-go permissiveness. Eventually the need for rest would drive the remaining visitors to their beds for the long stretch of the night. As if to lead the audience toward the shores of slumber, the film presented images of sleeping figures with increasing frequency as night fell: a dormant octopus, calling to mind the underwater views of Jean Painlevé's natural science films; sailors sleeping on a boat; workers taking a nap outdoors somewhere in Southeast Asia, likely sourced from a Dutch ethnographic film; men dozing on a beach in Northern Europe, still wearing their suits and hats as they recline on the sand. Interspersed among such nonfictional scenes of sleep from early cinema were their fictional counterparts, a catalog of bedside scenarios transpiring within domestic dramas, as well as trick films in which the bedrooms of unfortunate would-be sleepers are invaded by mischievous creatures.

SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL holds a magnifying glass to early cinema to expose its visual fascination with, and ritualistic evocations of, the act of sleep, and then, with another gesture, refracts its beam in the direction of the audience to induce a mimetic response to the figures on the screen. Scenes of slumber floated across the round screen, like clouds passing before a moon; meanwhile, the design of the installation resulted in a space of darkness, enclosure, and comfort irresistible to even the most finicky of sleepers. Footage and architecture converged around an endeavor to wholly integrate slumber into the experience of *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, both visually and phenomenally. In this endeavor, Apichatpong challenges the usual definition of cinema as a medium of animation, revealing a preoccupation with stillness and inaction that emerges in the medium's infancy, running in parallel with and inseparable from the appeal of movement and dynamism. Furthermore, he puts his own spin on the notion of putting one's audience to sleep, in a clear rejection of the more commonplace implications of this phrase. Discussing the piece, Apichatpong suggests that "asleep, you become part of another kind of cinema in the making."[2]

If the questions raised in *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* about the preferred objects and qualities of spectatorial attention seem intended as a provocation targeting conventional assumptions about the viewing experience, those audience members who arrive with a prior familiarity with Apichatpong's body of work will already be prepared to grapple with these questions. Dormant figures and bedroom scenes recur throughout his art and filmmaking to a striking degree. They appear in the narrative feature films on which he has built his reputation as one of the foremost auteurs of contemporary cinema: *Blissfully Yours* (*Sud Sanaeha*,

2002), which made his name on the global film circuit when it received Le Prix Un Certain Regard at the Cannes Film Festival; *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (*Lung Boonmee Raluek Chat*, 2010), the first Thai film ever to receive the prestigious Palme d'Or; *Cemetery of Splendor* (*Rak Ti Khon Kaen*, 2015), whose story centers on a group of soldiers afflicted with a sleeping sickness; and *Memoria* (2021), whose main character Jessica Holland is named after the sleepwalking woman in the American horror film *I Walked With a Zombie*.[3] Such scenes also appear across the corpus of photographs, videos, installations, and performances Apichatpong has produced as an artist, simultaneous with his filmmaking career. The sleeping body finds a natural lodging within his minute explorations of the spaces, rhythms, and materialities of everyday life. It also melds seamlessly with the languorous tempo of his moving- image works, which tend to pause the gaze in prolonged moments of stillness or set it adrift in hypnotic flows of images. Apichatpong's name comes up frequently in contemporary accounts of slow cinema, where he is cited as a key figure in the emergence in recent decades of a distinct aesthetics of slowness in global art cinema and beyond. His ongoing inquiry into states of somnolence is consistent with the formal strategies of deceleration and reduction that distinguish this cinema of slowness, along with the "relaxed form of panoramic perception" with which the latter is associated.[4]

At the same time, the affirmation of sleep as an integral part of the audience's experience of the work—suggested in many of Apichatpong's projects, but nowhere quite as emphatically as *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*—goes a long way beyond the drifting forms of attention typically attributed to slow cinema. On the one hand, the piece's address to and interpellation of an unseeing, unconscious viewer, combined with its marathon running time, calls to mind a longer history of avant-garde challenges to the norms of aesthetic contemplation. Consider, for instance, the opera *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), a collaboration between the composer Philip Glass and theater artist Robert Wilson. When asked about the opera's five-hour length, Glass shares a view expressed by his collaborator: "Well, you know, if you fall asleep, when you wake up it'll still be going on."[5] In his other theatrical projects, Wilson composed performances of even more extreme durations, extending from twelve hours up to seven days and thus engendering a "long wave rhythm" of attention inclusive of deep relaxation, diverted focus, and sleep. The cultivation of what Richard Schechner terms "selective inattention" as an alternative mode of reception—often by means of temporal dilation—threads throughout the postwar American avant-garde, connecting the durational media of music, performance, and film.[6] By situating *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* against this historical background, we can better grasp dimensions of this work that escape purely cinematic frameworks of analysis—such as the notion of spectatorship as participatory, real-time performance that is implied in Apichatpong's comment about the piece. Sleep is not merely an acceptable state in which to experience this work, but the most ideal. This position signals a decisive turn away from the



FIGURE 2. *SLEEP1237* (Shu Lea Cheang and Matthew Fuller, 2019). Courtesy of the artist.

focused vision and concentrated attentiveness that are traditionally prioritized as hallmarks of the aesthetic encounter, and that continue to operate as regulating ideals in contemporary debates about spectatorship.

On the other hand, *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* also calls to mind a host of more recent efforts to make sleep a part of the experience of works of art, music, and performance. Its description as a "unique, one-off project," while accurate in the sense that the installation has never been replicated, is somewhat complicated by the extent to which overnight sleeping arrangements have lately become available to visitors of museums, galleries, and venues of performance around the world. For example, the 2019 edition of the New York–based biennial Performa included *SLEEP1237*, by the Taiwanese artist Shu Lea Cheang in collaboration with the British media scholar Matthew Fuller. The piece consisted of a series of one-hour-long readings by various participants, interspersed with breaks, starting at 5:51p.m. and ending the next morning at 6:38 a.m. Among them were the actor Phumzile Sitole reading the Pantone color codes, the writer Larissa Pham reciting the first 10,000 primes, and the media scholar McKenzie Wark reading instructions and warnings for hormone replacement therapy medicine. The audience was provided with tryptophan-rich snacks, tranquilizing herbal teas, army blankets, and garbage bags stuffed with pillows on which to lounge. Some of them bunked high up on scaffolds mimicking the fire escapes of New York apartment buildings, recalling a time-honored urban tradition of decamping to the outdoors on hot summer nights.

While *SLEEP1237* references the sleeping conditions of the unhoused, and *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* emulates the format of a well-appointed budget hotel, other overnight works aim for a degree of comfort along the lines of a luxury boutique experience. An elevated bed formed the centerpiece of Carsten Höller's *Soma* (2010), installed in a former railway station in Berlin and one of many auto-powered moving and rotating beds built by the artist. The bed, mounted on a hydraulic platform that could be lowered or raised, constituted both an object of display in the exhibition for a waking audience and functional furniture for a more select few. For a fee of 1,000€, it could be reserved by one or two people to spend a night in the installation.[7] And at the 2000 Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale in Japan, the artist Marina Abramović converted a hundred-year-old farmhouse into *Dream House*, where guests spent the night in specially designed beds and pajamas and recorded their dreams in a "Dream Book."[8] Another group of examples can be found in overnight visits programmed by museums, such as the Rubin Museum of Art's highly popular annual event "Dream-Over." The 2019 exhibition *Edward Hopper and the American Hotel* at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts included a life-scale replica of the hotel room in Hopper's painting *Western Hotel*. Visitors could reserve an evening in the room, described on the museum's website as "an immersive space for overnight guests with an exclusive view inside the exhibition."[9]

While *Einstein on the Beach* invites slumber into its fold, as one possible response along a spectrum of selective inattention, the work neither explicitly calls for this response nor directly reflects upon the effects engendered by it. In contrast to this incidental status, sleep occupies a more prominent position as a central point of reference and axis of participation in *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* and many of its contemporary counterparts. As their titles suggest, these works involve sleep while also being about sleep, bringing an activity usually restricted to the most private spaces of life into public view and provoking a reconsideration by framing it within an unfamiliar situation. Representing this approach in contemporary theater is *8 Hours (Minimum)* (2013), an overnight performance from the Berlin-based collective Turbo Pascale, billed as a "sleep and tiredness laboratory" for "the fatigue society," capable of accommodating one hundred participants. With this description, the piece contains echoes of the "Laboratory of Sleep" designed by the Soviet architect Konstantin Melnikov for exhausted workers.[10] As Katharina Rost observes, *8 Hours (Minimum)* is one of numerous recent works of experimental theater whose primary aim is to induce audience responses of drowsiness, reverie, and self-absence.[11] In a similar vein, a 2014 stage adaptation of the classical Chinese novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* directed by Jim Findlay broke the text down into "dreams" of seven hours each, performed overnight with beds provided for the audience.[12]

The most telling illustration of this development, however, comes from the realm of performed music in the example of *Sleep* (2015), an eight-hour-long



FIGURE 3. *Soma* (Carsten Höller, 2010). Photo by John Macdougall.

composition for strings, piano, organ, synthesizer, and voice by the British composer of classical and film music Max Richter. The composition is meant to be listened to continuously throughout the night, a format that calls to mind the "sleep concerts" pioneered by the electronic musician Robert Rich and performed by him since the 1980s.[13] *Sleep* has been performed for recumbent audiences at venues ranging from world-class music halls like the Sydney Opera House to Austin's SXSW Music Festival. Richter describes the piece as an extended lullaby, composed with the purpose of putting the audience to sleep in order to explore the interaction between music and the unconscious mind (he cites as inspiration Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, purportedly commissioned by Count Keyserlingk to cure his insomnia).[14] The titling of the piece as simply *Sleep* is consistent with the composer's highly functionalist and oddly recursive description of it (not to mention the music's blandly repetitive structure): "The theme of the music is the listener's experience of it, and the musical material is the landscape which he or she inhabits."[15] Which is to say, *Sleep* sounds like music to sleep to, its content defined by its intended effect, leading the audience through a rather narrow gateway into the boundless territory of unconsciousness. Nonetheless, the success that has greeted the piece across disparate spheres of the music world and beyond—the concert has sold out most of the venues where it has been staged and was the subject of a 2020 documentary film—reveals the strong appeal of this territory.[16] The reception of *Sleep* speaks to the persuasiveness of its central proposition, encapsulated in an adage by Heraclitus cited in the liner notes: "Even a soul submerged in sleep is hard at work and helps make something of the world."[17]



FIGURE 4. *Sleep* (Max Richter, 2015). 2018 SXSW Music Festival. Photo by Travis P. Ball.

The question of what sleep helps make of the world has in recent years assumed a newly charged urgency, taken up by practitioners in a variety of media. The works discussed above represent but a small sampling from a larger phenomenon, a turn to sleep unfolding in contemporary art, film, performance, music, and dance. In and of itself, the fascination of sleep is nothing new, as the history of visual and narrative arts amply demonstrates. Many studies of this history have unpacked the iconographic, symbolic, and poetic resonance of the activity of slumber. For the ancient Greeks, to sleep brings one closer to death, according to the origin myth of Hypnos and Thanatos as twin siblings, but also closer to the gods. In the temples of Asklepios, to sleep was to receive the deity's healing powers and thus to be cured of one's ailments. Along with healing, Anne Carson observes, divine insight and special powers were bestowed upon the sleepers of myth and Homeric epic.[18] These implications persist in the imagery of the Italian Renaissance, informing the portrayal of poets and men of learning asleep among their books; discussing such sleeping-author portraits, Maria Ruvoldt identifies a link between slumber and divine inspiration or deep contemplation.[19] And in eighteenth-century French painting, Michael Fried argues, sleep was presented as a "vital sign" of intense absorption, equated with an idealized state of mind that is "inward, concentrated, closed."[20] Rather than an evacuation of attention, it denotes "an absorptive condition, almost an absorptive activity, in its own right."[21] While recent artistic engagements with sleep draw upon these associations, they also respond to newer conceptions that come to frame our understanding of this state, shaped by shifting perceptions that distinguish the current moment from earlier eras.

What I describe as a turn to sleep in the arts of the present transpires in tandem with a more far-reaching obsession with sleep in contemporary life, one that finds expression across a multitude of cultural and discursive domains. In news media, for instance, this obsession drives an entire subgenre of popular-science journalism. On a weekly basis, the latest findings of the science of sleep are transmitted to readers. Features on the sleep patterns of humans, jellyfish, or trees are interspersed with accounts of pathologies like fatal familial insomnia, reports on the societal tolls of sleep deprivation, and (perhaps most common of all) health advice on how to improve one's sleep. Implicit in this discourse is a sense that sleep has become a widespread topical concern for the body politic, newsworthy because we are not getting enough or not getting it right. Turning from editorial to advertising content—which are in any case often not so readily distinguishable—this sense only deepens. To offer a personal example: on my return flight from Rotterdam, where *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* had been exhibited, I found an uncanny echo of that experience in the inflight magazine, which included a special promotional section entitled "The Sleep Doctor's Secrets to an Ideal Sleep Environment." "To create an ideal sleep environment, you need to pay attention to four of the five senses: sight, sound, touch, and smell," the article stated, invoking the authority of a psychologist self-billed as The Sleep Doctor™.[22] Appearing alongside recommendations for each of these areas were advertisements for bedding, circadian lighting devices, and sound machines. Such admixtures of scientific expertise, self-help, and product hawking have become a standard marketing strategy for an increasingly lucrative sleep industry, applied to everything from old-fashioned mattresses to the latest technological gadgetry.

One of the best-selling books of the past decade is *Go the Fuck to Sleep*, written in the style of a children's book for frustrated parents.[23] For other reading options, the sleep-deprived might turn to one of the many insomnia memoirs that have appeared in the literary marketplace, such as Samantha Harvey's *The Shapeless Unease: A Year of Not Sleeping*.[24] In this same period, *Sleep with Me*—a podcast of long-winded, rambling stories narrated in a furry, droning voice—broke into the rank of top fifty podcasts; started in 2013, it now numbers more than one thousand episodes.[25] An analogous development is the appearance of sleep as a major genre category (alongside jazz, indie rock, hip hop) in music streaming services like Spotify; the success of Richter's *Sleep* is anticipated by the millions of subscribers to these sleep streams. The popular appetite for soothing, soporific sounds has even given rise to a novel audiovisual form, the ASMR video. Sleep is chic: the 2018 fall menswear show at Thom Browne replaced the catwalk with a flank of cots among which thirty models strolled out, rolled themselves into designer sleeping bags, and pretended to fall asleep. Shifting from the domain of popular culture to the specialized spheres of academia, the humanist disciplines have seen the rise of "critical sleep studies" at the turn of this century.[26] In anthropology, sociology, history, and

literature, sleep emerges as a fertile field of inquiry, approached in its myriad connections with particular contexts, institutions, geographies, and histories.

In the arts, popular culture, and public and scholarly discourses, sleep comes to the fore as a magnet of curiosity and desire, the object of a quest for deeper understanding. Driving this development is a spreading recognition that we have not fully considered the matter of sleep, despite being on intimate terms with it. As sleep moves out of the shadows and into an unprecedented visibility, it simultaneously reveals itself through a different lens. The traditionally suspicious view of sleep—as a thief of time, an obstacle to progress, an inconvenience to be tolerated only until the next cycle of waking activity—gives way to an attitude of solicitousness and respect. While the necessity of slumber was once met with heightened watchfulness, on guard against its pitfalls and excesses, in the present moment this attitude is ceding ground to a reparative impulse that runs counter to the hypervigilant stance of the paranoid critic, tightly wired and ever on the hunt for hidden dangers.[27] This reparative impulse, to cite Eve Sedgwick's definition, "wants to assemble and confer plenitude on an object that will then have resources to offer to an inchoate self."[28] The connection drawn by Sedgwick between the impulse to repair and the attribution of plenitude carries particular weight in this instance. For the turn to sleep confers upon it a positive role, breaking from a deeply entrenched tendency to characterize it negatively—that is, as a condition defined chiefly by the absence or interruption of the vital activities, processes, and qualities that constitute waking life. The reparative investment in sleep marks a distinct break from a deficient conception that equates sleep with passivity, emptiness, and stagnation of a physical, spiritual, or social nature.

A quick review of such associations finds them scattered across the history of Western thought. A notable point of reference for philosophies of sleep is Plato's denunciation of too much sleep as a threat to state order. He writes in *Laws*, "Staying awake at night is, for everyone, the key to dealing with a large part of their political or household business. . . . No one asleep is any good for anything; he might as well be dead. Those of us who set most store by life and thought spend as much time as possible awake."[29] His call to vigilance in the name of security finds an echo in the political ideal of *rex exsomnis*, or "the king who has no rest."[30] The prioritization of the business of daily life over and above the also daily need for rest has come to define the modern age in many ways. With the advent of technological capabilities to conquer darkness and disenchant night, sleeplessness emerges as a general condition, a world-historical orientation, and even an index of individual character.[31] At the same time, slumber enters into an alliance with the deadly sin of sloth, such that the imputation of vice infuses the appearance of inactivity. As Eluned Summers-Bremner writes in her history of insomnia, in eighteenth-century Europe, sleep was made into "the equivalent of a moral disorder." This development speaks to the insomniac proclivities of societies fueled by the global trade in stimulants (coffee, tea, and sugar) and inflamed by the credo

that "devotion and business . . . go hand in hand."[32] The devaluation of sleep continues in lockstep with the ascendance of an Enlightenment worldview defined by "a privileging of consciousness and volition, of notions of utility, objectivity, and self-interested agency," writes Jonathan Crary. Thus, he continues, "Descartes, Hume, and Locke were only a few of the philosophers who disparaged sleep for its irrelevance to the operation of the mind or the pursuit of knowledge."[33] Insofar as the sleep of reason produces monsters (to borrow from the title of Francisco Goya's famous etching of 1799), the sovereign subject is exhorted to overcome its darkness and awaken to "a permanent daylight—the daylight of reason."[34] With the birth of psychoanalysis, the danger of moral disorder gives way to ideas of psychic disorder that color twentieth-century understandings of sleep. Sigmund Freud viewed sleep and dreams as a periodic backtracking from the fully developed ego, a temporary state of regression intrinsically related to psychopathological states such as psychosis and narcissism. The misgivings that surround sleep in the modern era resonate in the present day, as evidenced by the currency of the term "woke" in American political discourse. Popularized by Erykah Badu's 2008 song "Master Teacher" and amplified by the Movement for Black Lives, woke received a new entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in June 2017. The revised definition conjoins a state of being awake with one of being "alert to injustice in society, especially racism."[35]

These discourses converge in a mode of shadow knowledge that grasps sleep in its deviation from a norm or ideal embodied in the conscious mind that is fully awake and alert. The sidelining of sleep by this norm reflects the difficulty of tackling sleep directly. Undeniably, there remains at its core an obscurity that is resistant to the light of scrutiny. Consciousness cannot form a representation of its own sleep; "to say 'I'm asleep' is in effect, literally, as impossible as to say 'I'm dead,'" writes Roland Barthes.[36] Any attempt to answer the question of my sleep can only end with frustration, for as Jean-Luc Nancy points out, "sleep appears only as non-appearing." Its very arrival entails a disappearance or becoming absent that discharges the circuits of self-reflection and "carries away any sort of analysis."[37] To draw closer to this object of would-be inquiry is to relinquish by proportional degrees the presence of mind that is prerequisite to the very exercise of inquiry. On this basis, it would be tempting to relegate sleep to a realm of unknowability that tolerates no analysis and puts an end to all attempts at description, as Nancy does when he identifies the sleeper as an I who has become "the thing itself. . . . isolated from all manifestation, from all phenomenality, the sleeping thing at rest, sheltered from knowledge, techniques, and arts of all kinds, exempt from judgments and prospects." Elaborating this formulation through a series of aporetic constructions—that is, sleep as an appearance of nonappearing, as a presence-in-absence—Nancy concludes that "there can be no phenomenology of sleep."[38] To look to sleep as the vanishing point of reflection is to reaffirm the premise of a fundamental incompatibility that invariably intrudes between sleep and the sensing,

thinking mind. When the sleeping consciousness is reduced to "a recess of pure nothingness," the primacy of the waking consciousness remains unquestioned, and the sovereignty of the self-possessed subject remains intact.[39]

From other philosophical viewpoints, however, sleep presents an opportunity to "make us acquainted with a genus of being with regard to which the subject is not sovereign, without the subject being inserted in it."[40] For Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a phenomenology of sleep is not only possible but indeed crucial for an understanding of precisely those dimensions of mental and physical life that are neglected by modern ontologies of the subject, lying beyond the intentional agency of a self-directed subject and posing obstructions to "the transparency of the 'I think.'"[41] "The sleep of consciousness is not consciousness of sleep," Merleau-Ponty writes at multiple points in his lecture notes on this question.[42] Slipping free from its subordinate object position, sleep encounters consciousness on equal footing in a murky place where shapes recede without entirely vanishing, where traces of the world (or "the debris of the past and present") litter the void of nothingness.[43] Rejecting the reductive binary of presence versus absence, phenomenological accounts of sleep approach it as "a modality of perceptual progression" and a "divergence" toward unwilled, involuntary, and passive modes of experience. A different perspective on sleep emerges in conjunction with the challenge to modern ontologies of the reasoning subject, relating it to what Jacqueline Risset describes as the pleasurable and peculiar turns of reflection that come with "the defeat of our thought, the defeat of the supremacy of our experience."[44] As José Esteban Muñoz conjectures, in the "ontological humility" that comes with sleep, we might discover a resource for resisting "practices of thought that reify a kind of ontological totality—a totality that boxes us into an intractable and stalled version of the world."[45]

The mystery of sleep also persists as a scientific riddle. Even as scientists have confirmed the universality of sleep in the animal kingdom, a firm understanding of why this is so is far from established. Nonetheless, the study of human sleep in the age of electroencephalography (EEG) and neuroscience has yielded insights that similarly shift the perspective on sleep away from negativity and deficiency. Neurophysiological studies reveal it to be less an interruption than an *intensification* of cognitive activity and life processes. Rather than a passive or reduced functional mode, sleep is a highly active state. It constitutes a specific mode of functioning in its own right—marked by its own rhythms, phasic variations, and thresholds—whose complexity exceeds any binary logic that frames sleep solely in opposition to waking. During REM sleep (or rapid eye movement sleep, when most dreaming takes place), our brain activity, eye movement, and metabolism are equally or even more active than when awake. NREM sleep (non-rapid eye movement sleep, also known as stage 3 or deep sleep) was once hypothesized to resemble a state of coma or hibernation, but today is understood as an "active and meticulously coordinated state of cerebral unity," enabling "communication

possibilities between distant regions of the brain."[46] And in the stage of light sleep, people can still respond to external stimuli, believe themselves to be awake, and engage in automatic behaviors. The discovery of the body's circadian rhythms further discredits the notion that sleeping and waking can be defined in oppositional terms; rather, they are enmeshed as complementary elements of an integral circadian cycle. Animal sleep is controlled by the body's circadian clock, described by the psychiatrist Thomas Wehr as a "pacemaker" that "creates a day and night within the organism that mirrors the world outside."[47] The discovery of circadian rhythms "has the effect of uniting waking and sleeping into a single, carefully equilibrated system, so that it becomes impossible to ask what sleep is for without asking what waking is for."[48]

In other spheres of knowledge, too, the shell of alterity and unknowability that surrounds our slumber is being chipped away by a finer attunement to sleep's complex imbrications with waking life. New research from critical sleep studies constructs an understanding of sleep as a positive form of socially and culturally informed expression, thus further discrediting its reduction to mere inactivity. In the words of the anthropologist Roger Ivar Lohmann,

> Sleeping, like waking life, is a biocultural phenomenon that manifests as interrelated ideals, bodily practices, and artifacts contextualized in a sociocultural matrix that is subject to historical change. The formula "sleep is to passivity as waking is to agency" is false because it regards sleep as a lack of wakefulness and intentionality rather than as a distinctive mode of mental and motor behavior in its own right. It also ignores intrusions of waking in bouts of sleep, and vice versa, which vary crossculturally. Sleeping and waking infuse each another, and do so in different ways, depending on the enculturation history of sleepers.[49]

In the social sciences as much as the biological sciences, sleep is grasped as an actively lived condition, or a "technique of the body." It is molded by social expectations and institutional demands, as well as expressive of cultural logics of time and space that change through history and across places.[50] The answer to the universal need for sleep unfolds along a varying spectrum of practices, and what many readers of this book have likely internalized as the correct, normal, and desirable way to sleep—in a single consolidated phase of roughly eight hours, alone or with one bed partner, in a space specially designated for this purpose—represents but one limited position on this spectrum.

At the Edges of Sleep approaches the artistic turn to sleep as not just one more outgrowth of this larger reconceptualization but also a key to delineating its stakes, mapping its contours, and marking its perils and possibilities. The works discussed in the chapters that follow build upon the insight that the boundary between sleep and wake consists less in a rigid division than in a dynamic edge zone of overlap and interaction, of tension and confluence. As sleep moves from the margins to the center, we are presented with a challenge to reassess its significance and role. If sleep is enmeshed in the orders—and disorders—of waking life, then it must also

hold the potential to intervene in these orders and reconfigure the forms of our experience. In the difficulty of reconciling sleep with the systems of value that shape the waking world, there also resides the potential to interrogate, dismantle, and reconfigure these very systems. By the same token, however, this potential cannot be staked upon a simple transvaluation of sleep's unassimilable otherness—a move that recodes its negativity as an exemption from the determinations of history, power, and socialization and essentializes its obscurity as an authentic or primordial expression of unspoiled experience. What is the value of sleep on its own terms, then? What is it that we seek to preserve in carving out a space for sleep?

These questions demarcate the general conceptual field in which this book wanders. But the particular course along which it traverses this potentially limitless terrain follows closely on the tracks of the figure referenced at the beginning of this introduction, Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Apichatpong has engaged with the subject of sleep with an unmatched degree of persistence, depth, and systematicity throughout his entire career as an artist and filmmaker. Scenes of sleep reappear throughout his films and videos as a nocturnal motif, an essential element of the atmospheres and audiovisual universes conjured therein, and an inroad toward otherworldly and liminal modes of being. When darkness descends and the curtain of somnolence drops, a crack simultaneously appears among its folds, affording a glimpse into another dimension. Following his characters behind this curtain, we meet halfway the ghosts and spirits who stir from their hibernation, the histories and alternative realities hidden by the light of day. Sleep, far from negating action and meaning, extends these into new territories as it designates ways of existing in the world—in connection with other people, places, nature, and the past. Emerging from the shadows and into the frame, sleep introduces a perspective on these relationships that moves beyond the structuring divisions of interior and exterior, individual and communal, past and present. The first part of this book traces the intricate perspectives on this activity that unfold throughout Apichatpong's corpus, placing these perspectives into dialogue with works by other filmmakers and authors.

Going further, Apichatpong situates sleep at the core of the medium of moving images. Human sleep is organized by cycles that repeat through the night, and the average length of each cycle is roughly ninety minutes—the equivalent of a standard feature-length film, he points out. "To go to the cinema," Apichatpong suggests, "is to go to sleep." His explorations of somnolent states thus tie into a reflexive investigation of the forms of moving-image media and the phenomenology of spectatorship. These threads of investigation come together in projects like *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, in which the dismantling and recombination of the constitutive elements of the exhibitionary apparatus open a door through which fluctuating and checkered states of consciousness can readily enter the cinema experience. For the audience, too, the curtain of somnolence brings not the finality of

closure, but rather an opening of passageways between voluntary and involuntary streams of thought, perception and memory, attentiveness and inattentiveness. In mining the possibilities of sleepy spectatorship, Apichatpong shows his hand as not just an artist and director, but also a theorist, for whom the making of moving images comprises one dimension of an ongoing reflection on what cinema was and where it is heading. He takes up these concerns through the rubric of a *permeable* ontology; as May Adadol Ingawanij and David Teh have argued, this quality of permeability references at once regionally distinct traditions of cinema projection and present-day mutations of moving-image environments.[51]

The second part of this book sets the stage for an inquiry into his theoretical interventions by turning to sleep in connection with exhibition and spectatorship. Apichatpong belongs to a lineage of thinkers who have posited a fundamental identity between the experience of moving images and the state of slumber. Within this discourse of narcotic reception—which shadows a long history of theorizing cinema's medium-specific properties and effects, linking together its shifts of focus and intellectual realignments—the tension between a negative and positive conception of sleep also structures the field. If cinema wraps its audience in darkness, stills them into silence, and mesmerizes them with its projected beam of light, these sedative effects have been construed as a threat to the faculties of waking thought. Many thinkers turn to the figure of a sleeping spectator as an emblem of the medium's powers of deception, manipulation, and ideological mystification. For others, however, the changes engendered in the audience's state of consciousness entail not a shutting down but rather an expansion and release of embodied perceptual experience, beyond its most familiar zones and well-traveled pathways. From such a perspective, a positive understanding of sleep provides the basis for a finer attunement to the dynamics of reception. Sleepy spectatorship raises an intriguing question: can inconsistent attention, or even inattention, amount to a difference, rather than a necessary detraction, in the experience of moving-image media, a difference that might become the basis for other kinds of mental connections forged in the process of viewing and listening?

The question carries a particular resonance in a context marked by the dissemination of projected moving images from the traditional movie theater to a host of other spaces and platforms, where they are encountered on a variety of screens or in a multitude of windows. Pushed beyond its previous natural habitat, as Francesco Casetti argues, cinema does not die or become extinct so much as it enters into a continuing process of becoming, reborn again and everywhere in new assemblages.[52] In this situation, the contrast between old and new ways of experiencing moving images is often couched within an opposition between passive and active spectatorship. Passivity might be attributed to the filmgoer in the theater, immobilized in a chair and hypnotized by the image, in contrast to the ambulatory viewer who can interact with the display on their own terms.[53] Or else the label might be pinned to the latter who, like an overstimulated window

shopper, cannot slow down and give full attention to the work, in contrast to the film viewer for whom the theater offers a last refuge for pure, concentrated looking.[54] Contemporary debates about spectatorship betray an impulse to manage the unruly transformations of audiovisual and moving-image media by resuscitating old schemas that pit distraction against concentration, unthinking passivity against idealized activity, degraded perception against perfect attentiveness. Sleep points beyond the impasse of these dichotomies as a provocation to consider attention in all its volatility and permeability. It challenges us to let go of positions that bond particular forms of attention with the capacity for intellection and critical agency. For Apichatpong and his fellow somnophiles, sleep emerges as an answer to the need for new models of encounter, contact, and engagement between the audience and the work.

The construction of this book along dual tracks—bringing together a wide-angle survey of a large topic with an in-depth analysis of an individual body of work—is motivated by its methodological wager. There is no guide more suitable than Apichatpong to the challenge of navigating the aesthetic and political currents generated by the turn to sleep, especially as these ripple through the sphere of moving-image art. And conversely, there is no better lens than sleep to direct at his work. For this lens brings into sharp focus Apichatpong's considerable impact on art and cinema at the turn of this century, along with the somewhat unique position he occupies as a practitioner who has maintained a steady and growing presence in contemporary art, worked continuously within the specialized domain of experimental film and video, and established a reputation as one of the most lauded film directors in the world—all at the same time. While these disparate dimensions of his practice have evolved interactively from the very beginning of his career, in recent years this interaction has intensified. Simultaneously, sleep has moved to the forefront of his projects, a locus of cross-referential and remediated amplifications. It emerges as the fulcrum of a deepening reflection on an interrelated set of formal, historical, and political concerns. A focus on sleep therefore contributes to a fuller picture of Apichatpong's cultural significance by bringing into conversation the multiple itineraries of his practice, counterbalancing a tendency in the existing scholarship to focus primarily on his narrative feature-length productions.[55]

My approach in this book is monographic in its impulse but centrifugal in its execution. It sustains an inquiry into Apichatpong by placing his work in conversation with a host of interlocutors from various periods, places, and disciplines around the question of sleep, weaving these objects into a web that spreads outward from his corpus proper. At several points the focus moves away from Apichatpong at length before turning back to him, in the process of taking up the ideas posed in his projects and developing them further along new pathways. But even when absent as an object of direct analysis, he nonetheless hovers beyond the discussion in the manner of a magnetic pole, determining its directions and

detours. To the extent that *At the Edges of Sleep* centers on Apichatpong, it does so in a collaborative spirit of *thinking with*, beyond only *writing about*, with the aim of entering into an open-ended dialogue with his body of work rather than circumscribing it within an interpretive framework. In adopting this method, I have been guided by Erin Manning's insight that Apichatpong demands "a wholly different ethos of engagement . . . with the forces of thought that move through the work and make it work."[56] Considering his corpus as an open "relational platform" of entities that are not fully finished or complete in themselves, Manning identifies the task of the writer as one of *intercession*, which can be distinguished from explanation, as an endeavor to be activated by the work while reactivating it in turn, to become "a participant in a process that has yet to quite unfold," and to respond to his provocation to ask "what we have not yet been able to see."[57]

In writing this book, I have taken my cues from its central subject. *At the Edges of Sleep* is broken down into chapters that are mostly shorter than those of the standard academic monograph. With its larger number of parts, the book more readily branches out across the manifold referents and directions suggested by Apichatpong's work, assuming an internal pliability that can accommodate the multidimensionality of its central subject. Dividing the composition in this way also created more openings through which to incorporate an assortment of interlocutors, as well as more seams and edges that could function as zones of juxtaposition between different objects and thinkers. While I have found a certain utility in this structure, I have not allowed it to dictate the shape of my thinking or to foreclose the option of sustained analysis. Thus the chapters overlap and bleed into one another. While in some places they move onto new ground, elsewhere they circle back and continue previous discussions from a new angle or in a framework. In this respect, the shaping of the book bears the imprint of sleep—unfolding across varying levels of depth, performing a volatile and permeable mode of attention, and maintaining a receptiveness to deviant turns and unlikely associations.[58]

As this strategy implies, to fully tackle the matter of sleep necessitates above all the cultivation of a certain receptivity. Merleau-Ponty's insistence that consciousness of sleep will yield few insights into the sleep of consciousness can be taken as a warning for us would-be students: striving to awaken to the lessons of sleep, we are in danger of missing the point completely. But to reach this condition of receptivity and come around to the propositions of the subject at hand might not even require the most strenuous effort—just the smallest of steps for anyone who is already tired, pushed to the limits of their physical and cognitive endurance. The turn to sleep can be read as a reaction against conditions of lived time that take shape under constant pressures to be productive and pay attention. As Rost observes, drowsing in the theater constitutes the "anti-model" to cultural expectations of efficiency, activity, and accomplishment.[59] The urge to close the eyes, relax the body, and unfocus the mind therefore instantiates not just a path of least resistance but also a calculated disengagement from these pressures and a deliberate

interruption of, or release from, the regular programming of time. Within the framework of an "ecology of attention," the endeavor to make room for sleep in spaces of film, performance, and art is coextensive with temporal strategies of slowing down that have surged into prominence precisely at a time when acceleration and overload have emerged as keywords describing the corrosive cognitive effects of modern technology and late capitalism.[60]

The turn to sleep can thus signal participation in a history of revolt against the cult of productivity, reaffirming what Paul Lafargue termed "the right to be lazy."[61] Sleep can be another way of "doing nothing," in the words of Jenny Odell, such that those looking for ways to unplug from the financialized networks and platforms that run on the depletable fuel of attention might very well opt for a nap.[62] It entails not active resistance but passive refusal, calling to mind "those tactics of illegibility, opacity, and inaction that remain outside of the field of political action properly conceived," in the words of Lilian Mengesha and Lakshmi Padmanabhan.[63] But alternatively, sleep can just as readily be reabsorbed into the economy of attention and experience, to the extent that it is now common for sectors of this economy to "promote deceleration as a palliative to the ills of contemporary speed."[64] The turn to sleep shows the double edge of a refusal staked upon a claim to exception, capable at once of cutting against the grain of a dominant culture and carving out isolated zones of differentiation as compensatory havens wherein the distressed sensorium can be restored to a condition of wholeness—or what Sarah Sharma describes as "spatial solutions" that ultimately fail to solve a more systemic "problem of time."[65] Thus the following chapter contends further with the slippery cultural politics of sleep and the divergent restorative agendas to which it is pressed to contribute, constructing a requisite prelude for the book's analysis of sleep in specific works and exhibitionary contexts.

Finally, for anyone who watches and writes about moving-image media on a regular basis, the provocation of sleeping in the theater is not a matter of merely theoretical interest. For the injunction to relinquish a stance of watchful readiness and surrender to languorous dissipation flies directly in the face of critical norms. It runs up against the viewing habits conscientiously cultivated by those audiences with a professional stake in spectatorship, for whom the demonstration of a hyper-discerning, ultra-alert gaze amounts to an expenditure of effortful labor and a marker of expertise. For such viewers, a notion of reception inclusive of sleep is likely to be difficult to come to terms with, colliding as it does with internalized disciplinary habits of attention. Yet ironically, it is precisely this kind of viewer—one who tends to come to the viewing experience by way of a wide variety of preexisting conditions, sometimes eagerly, sometimes begrudgingly, at other times in a miasma of jet-lagged exhaustion or festival-induced enervation, in marathon stretches of back-to-back screenings in which days blur into nights and back again, or under the time pressure of editorial deadlines and teaching schedules—who is also most likely to already be on familiar terms with reception in a

state of somnolence. For those whose viewing patterns spill across the long spans and outlying edges of lived time, the push for endurance inevitably makes sleep all the more impossible to resist, and this interplay can give rise to strangely pleasurable and uniquely memorable viewing experiences. Working on this project led me back to some of my own experiences of sleeping with projected images, which stand out vividly in my memory not despite my hazy consciousness, but because of it. And along the way of presenting this material, I heard from many friends and colleagues about their own stories of sleeping at the movies, some truly marvelous. Perhaps the sleepy gaze is ultimately the gaze of the cinephile, which is to say, the lover—intimately familiar, assured of its object, affectively charged in its unpredictability, and reluctant to part company.

2

Sleep Must Be Protected

In March of 2019, a "blessing of the beds" took place at the Ashara Ekundayo Gallery in downtown Oakland, California. This event marked the opening ceremony for *Black Womxn Dreaming/Divine the Darkness*, a collectively authored, site-specific, and interactive work consisting of a public installation at the gallery and a private "durational ritual" (in the words of the artists) taking place elsewhere in the city. *Black Womxn Dreaming/Divine the Darkness* can be considered alongside projects like *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* and *SLEEP1237* as a work that integrates the experience of actual sleep in a participatory fashion and within a specified framework. But in contrast to these other examples, it also removed the activity of slumber from the public space of exhibition, situating it instead in a separate location disclosed only by means of informal networks within the local community. For seven consecutive days, this location was transformed into a space dedicated entirely to the dreams, sleep, and rest of Black women, with participants joining this ongoing "private ritual of resting" on a rotating basis throughout the week. The invitation to participate in the ritual was addressed to all those of African descent "who experience life through the lens of womxn/girl in body, spirit, identity past, present, future and fluid."[1] The 2019 event was one of several episodes constituting *House/Full of Black Women*, a five-year-long performance project conceived by the choreographer and artist Amara Tabor-Smith, co-directed with Ellen Sebastian Chang, and driven by the core question: "How can we, as black women and girls find space to breathe, and be well within a stable home?"[2]

Those involved in the realization of *Black Womxn Dreaming/Divine the Darkness*—Tabor-Smith, Sebastian Chang, Alexa Burrell, Amber McZeal, Gina Breedlove, to name a few whose words I cite below—spoke about the activity at the core of the ritual during the blessing ceremony and afterwards. Their comments reflected the positive formulations of sleep that circulate in contemporary discourse, granting it a generative role at many levels. At the biological level, sleep is a vital time in which essential restorative processes transpire—or "sleep is when

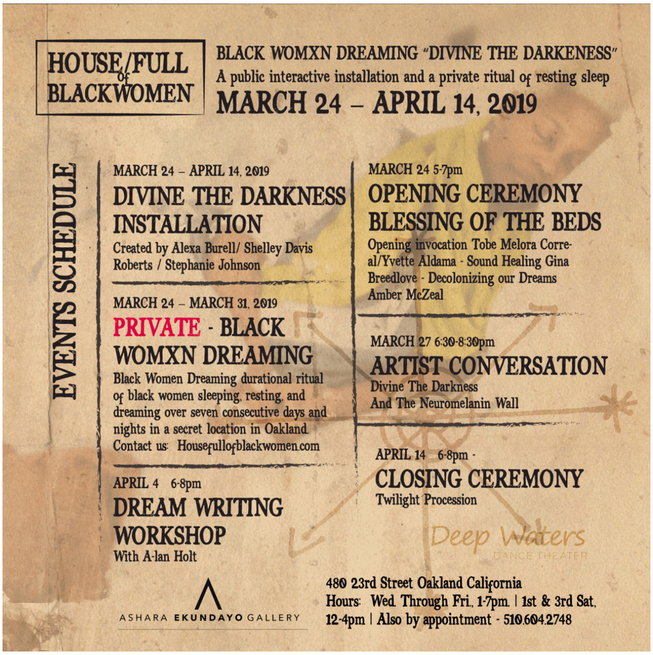


FIGURE 5. *Black Womxn Dreaming/Divine the Darkness* (House/Full of Black Women, 2019). Poster by Ernesto Sopprani. Courtesy of the artist.

the brilliance of the body begins," as McZeal stated at one point. She summoned these restorative capacities in the name of a program of communal revitalization and empowerment, invoking sleep as a means of "rebuilding the strength of our bodies and communities." Sebastian Chang spoke to the importance of sleep and rest as part of ongoing revolutionary struggle. Capitalism teaches us that doing work is the source of all value and meaning, she declared, but we say no and assert the right to sleep. Just as notably, this refusal is staked upon the right to sleep *here*, in a neighborhood and city that has seen the displacement of large numbers of residents by rampant gentrification—as exemplified in the location of the Ashara Ekundayo Gallery itself, an independent art space in a modest one-story wooden building surrounded by newly constructed office buildings and condominiums. For these artists, then, to sleep is an act not only of taking power, but also reclaiming place. Finally, nothing in this society encourages Black women to sleep better and so, in Sebastian Chang's words, "we are going to have to teach ourselves." Invoking the limits of the body and the right to rest, they simultaneously initiate a rechanneling of energies toward the forging of a world formed by different values.

In carving out a time and place for sleep as part of a Black feminist political project, *Black Womxn Dreaming/Divine the Darkness* can be seen as another instance of the revaluation of sleep in the twenty-first century, recognizing its

positive capacity while rejecting a negative conception of sleep as deficiency. As I have suggested, this revised understanding stems from a broadly growing sense of dysfunctionality; who but the deprived can best appreciate the reparative effects of sleep? At the same time, *Black Womxn Dreaming/Divine the Darkness* challenges the promise of easy solutions to a ubiquitous shortage of energy and attention. It insists on specific histories and economies of exhaustion that cannot be subsumed to a generalized crisis of sleep, as this chapter will argue.[3]

Indeed, the phenomenon I have mapped as a shift from paranoid to reparative demands further qualification, insofar as it reflects another set of dynamics that converge around sleep as a moving target of knowledge, not a static locus to whose underlying truth we are just now catching up. For the reparative impulse sets its sights not only upon the "inchoate self" who stands to be put in order, but also upon sleep as an object in need of rehabilitation. Within this dynamic field of knowledge, sleep shuttles between the position of problem and solution, disease and antidote, alarm and answer. It embodies a promise that is constituted in dialectical tension with its problematic status, such that the plenitude it bodes cannot be unknotted from the lack it simultaneously figures. Sleep is a remedy whose powers to cure seem to grow in proportion to the degree of affliction it presents, in a peculiar kind of reverse homeopathic logic, looked to as a panacea for an ever-widening range of problems. This peculiar logic informs the coinage in 2017 of a new diagnostic term in clinical sleep medicine: orthosomnia, or insomnia caused by anxiety about getting enough sleep.[4]

Orthosomnia is the symptomatic endgame of our current fixation on sleep, behind which is a growing consciousness of, and sensitivity to, the untenably disordered state of modern slumber. A mounting alarm finds expression through the rhetoric of risk, mass affliction, and crisis. The constant refrain sounded in this discourse is the inadequate quantity and quality of the rest we receive—whether signaled in the rise of the sleep disorder as a prevalent medical complaint, the exponential increase in specialized sleep clinics at the turn of this century, or the deluge of therapeutic advice and tools available to those seeking to improve their slumber.[5] The notion of "sleep debt" has entered the popular lexicon as an index of the disparity between the required and actual amount of nightly sleep. As this disparity accumulates across bodies and chronic tiredness comes to define the experience of wakefulness for increasing numbers and demographics of people, sleep debt scales up along the lines of a national fiscal crisis—or a "great sleep recession," as recently declared by a group of pediatric researchers.[6] The widespread impacts of lost sleep are also formulated as a public health emergency, linking it with depression, dementia, cardiovascular disease, and numerous other leading medical causes of death, along with traffic fatalities and industrial accidents.[7] Noting the contribution of sleep deprivation to the human error responsible for ecological catastrophes like the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill (which released an estimated 10.8 million gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound), some

have reached beyond the framework of national emergency to compare the crisis of sleep to a planetary disaster.[8]

At the time of this writing, in the midst of the shutdowns instituted in many parts of the world in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, there has been a marked upward spike in references to exhaustion, burnout, and sleep disturbance in the public conversation. The problem of sleep assumes pandemic proportions, a result of the upending of the routines of workplace and home, as well as an effect of the amplification of already existing imbalances in the rhythms of everyday life and the care of bodies (imbalances that have everything to do with race, class, and gender). The observation that the shutdowns have not so much disrupted the functioning of our social systems as they have exposed and exacerbated the dysfunctions all along structurally embedded in these systems also applies to sleep in this context.[9] For if the disturbed sleep currently experienced by so many stems directly from the disturbances wrought by the pandemic situation—with its scrambling of schedules, rezoning of spaces, and dive into the inescapability of screen-mediated relationality—this represents not an entirely new condition but rather one more stage in an ongoing process of disordering, or an acceleration of a preexisting condition. The elusiveness of a good night's sleep reflects the priorities of a society intent upon conquering the difference between day and night, abolishing the distinction between work and nonwork, and collapsing the divide between on and off. As Benjamin Reiss points out, the nineteenth-century labor movement slogan "eight hours for work, eight hours for sleep, and eight hours for what we please" imposed a "standard model" on sleep by cementing an expectation that one single, continuous eight-hour interval would suffice for the daily requirement of workers.[10] A firm limit established in defense of time for rest simultaneously disciplines this activity in accordance with the demands of an industrial economy, bringing sleep into alignment with what the labor historian E. P. Thompson has termed modern time-discipline.[11] Yet even this ambiguous limit further loses its meaning in a postindustrial era characterized by the ceaseless circulation of goods, money, and information in a globally networked world; the erosion of labor protections and, concomitantly, the increase of flexible schedules, shift work, and contract hiring; and the technological extensions of an attention economy that absorbs all instants of life.

The link between the attenuations of sleep and the assaults of a nonstop, 24/7 world features throughout discussions of the spreading epidemic of exhaustion.[12] A particularly bracing account of the fate of sleep under such conditions—and stirring call to protect sleep from the forces that would erode it—comes from Jonathan Crary's 2017 book *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*. Crary describes 24/7 as "a global infrastructure for continuous work and consumption," one that strives for no less than the "generalized inscription of human life into duration without breaks defined by a principle of continuous functioning." The excesses of this regime find their ultimate expression in the vision of an existence with-

out sleep, beyond natural limits, in which rest "has no necessity or inevitability."[13] Such a vision is what propels the US Department of Defense's research into amphetamines and drugs like Provigil, with the objective of enabling combatants to stay awake for days at a time during sustained military operations. Citing this example at the beginning of his book, Crary suggests that the soldier "whose physical capabilities will more closely approximate the functionalities of non-human apparatuses and networks" can be seen as the forerunner of the contemporary worker and consumer.[14] The trajectory of Provigil from the military to the civilian sphere bears out his claim: approved by the Federal Drug Administration for the treatment of sleep disorders like narcolepsy in 2004 (under the name modafinil), the drug has seen the vast majority of its profits driven by off-label uses.[15] As a "wakefulness promoting agent," it is sought out for its improvement of attentional performance by corporate road warriors, journalists, and others in the figural trenches of the postindustrial economy.[16]

The imagination of a post-sleep existence, once the province of science fiction, spreads throughout the everyday world, where there is no shortage of reminders that "within the globalist neoliberal paradigm, sleep is for losers."[17] (And even within literary representations of the fictional future, the ascendance of 24/7 can be detected; while earlier sci-fi books tend to locate their post-sleep subjects in zones of recreation and leisure, more recent ones assign them to the setting of the board room and research center.[18]) For example, a common sight in San Francisco's underground Muni stations in the late aughts were advertisements for the start-up freelance temp agency Fiverr. In one ad, a portrait of a twenty-something sporting a tailored jacket (professionally passing) and septum ring (yet creative, or outside the box) is overlaid with a phrase in capital letters: "Dreamers, kindly step aside." Under the company logo appears the catchphrase "in doers we trust." In another of their ads, the text reads, "You eat a coffee for lunch. You follow through on your follow through. Sleep deprivation is your drug of choice. You might be a doer." The ads evoke a popular mythology that conflates a somnophobic attitude with an ethic of work and industriousness. The self-denying sleep habits of highly successful people, from Thomas Edison to Martha Stewart to any number of Silicon Valley CEOs, are brought to the portrayal of the ideal gig worker as the entrepreneur of their self.[19] Moreover, in their vaunting of an image of productive busyness (encapsulated in a generic notion of doing) to the detriment of not only rest, but also dreams, food, and recreational drugs, these ads reprise a familiar accounting of time lost versus time well spent. The calculation that every hour diverted from value-producing activity amounts to an hour wasted has roots in a modern cult of productivity and utility. As these values come to determine the worth of time, so the voluntary restriction of one's hours of sleep likewise comes to signify reasoned self-interest and even moral virtue. When the "Bullion of the Day is minted out into Hours," as Benjamin Franklin famously wrote, sleep can only be seen as a felon.[20]

As this example suggests, the 24/7 society's aspiration to override the limits of wakefulness belongs to a longer history of sleep denial. Alertness-promoting medications like modafinil find an antecedent in what Sidney Mintz calls the "drug foods" of tea, coffee, and sugar. Starting in the seventeenth century, the demand for these drug foods soared, and their production and trade generated enormous wealth for Europe's expanding colonial empires.[21] This age of empire saw the rise of the coffeehouse as a modern institution linking a developing commercial sphere with an emergent public sphere. Roger Schmidt identifies the coffeehouse as the beating heart of a radical transformation in the "architecture of human sleep," one in which sleeplessness materializes as "a symptom of modernity, as well as one of its primary causes."[22] Caffeine powered the discursive output of the very writers who entrenched the insomniac orientation of the modern age in their proclaimed values. Samuel Johnson, known to consume as many as twenty-four cups of tea in a single sitting, disparaged sleep as an adversary throughout his writings, as in the ode, "Short, O short then be thy reign, And give us to the world again!"[23] The phrase *Nox insomnis*, along with references to fatigue, recur throughout his diaries, Schmidt observes, while the word *insomnia* appeared in English for the first time in 1758.[24] Eluned Summers-Bremner similarly describes the early modern period as an age of insomnia, when "sleep was rendered difficult due to new mobilizations of desire" and the "material contradictions" generated thereby.[25] Crary alludes to this longer history of sleep denial in referencing Marx's analysis of the "constant continuity" of capitalist circulation and exchange in the *Grundrisse*. "In effect," he writes, "Marx is positing 24/7 temporalities as fundamental to the workings of capital."[26] In his *Capital*, Marx makes the point even more bluntly: "The prolongation of the working day beyond the limits of the natural day, into the night, acts only as a palliative . . . . To appropriate labour during all the 24 hours of the day is, therefore, the inherent tendency of capitalist production." Sleeplessness is at once the predisposition and the telos of capitalist modernity, a condition sustaining and perpetuating the world that engendered it.

Building on these long-term developments but also breaking through to a new threshold, Crary argues, 24/7 ushers in an endless temporality foreclosing interruption and difference, along with rupture and the possibility of change. Disconnected from natural cycles of time, the self-same, self-perpetuating present is subject only to the natural law of entropy as it brings about "the exhaustion of life and the depletion of resources." Late capitalism will settle for nothing less than the end of sleep. Yet it is precisely at a point when this goal seems more achievable than ever that sleep asserts its potency. In a moment of danger, sleep discloses its status as "the only remaining barrier, the only enduring 'natural condition' that capitalism cannot eliminate."[27] For even as "most of the seemingly irreducible necessities of human life—hunger, thirst, sexual desire, and recently the need for friendship—have been remade into commodified or financialized forms," Crary writes, sleep stands apart as a "colossal exception," an "interval of time that cannot

be colonized and harnessed to a massive engine of profitability."[28] Sleep may be attacked from all sides, but it cannot be subsumed. He sets forth this case with dazzling polemics:

> In its profound uselessness and intrinsic passivity, with the incalculable losses it causes in productive time, circulation, and consumption, sleep will always collide with the demands of a 24/7 universe. The huge portion of our lives that we spend asleep, freed from a morass of simulated needs, subsists as one of the great human affronts to the voraciousness of contemporary capitalism. Sleep is an uncompromising interruption of the theft of time from us by capitalism . . . . In spite of all the scientific research in this area, it frustrates and confounds any strategies to exploit or reshape it. The stunning, inconceivable reality is that nothing of value can be extracted from it.[29]

The basis on which sleep has been denigrated in the modern era—its uselessness, wastefulness, and intransigent negativity—provides the exact terms by which it is recovered as a resource for an oppositional politics. As the only remnant of an uninvaded natural existence, sleep stands as a last line of resistance against 24/7 capitalism and a starting point for the repair of the social bonds devastated by the latter. Thus, the book concludes with a call to arms: to preserve any hope of awakening to a future after capitalism, sleep must be protected.

Here we find another instance of the self-referential reparative logic that holds up sleep as the cure for the malady it simultaneously embodies, a solution mirroring the contours of the problem. The promise of sleep as a political remedy retraces with precision the degree to which exhaustion stands out as a primary political symptom of contemporary life. Crary's account has become a touchstone for recent discussions of sleeplessness and burnout. But can the political significance of sleep be staked entirely upon the claim to a default exceptionality, regardless of other factors? Among those who evince doubt is William Davies, who, in a review of *24/7*, observes that "Crary has a curiously Taylorist view of value extraction, and scarcely any view of value creation."[30] The assertion of a fundamental incommensurability between the passivity of sleep and the activity of the economy becomes less convincing when weighed against the backdrop of the postindustrial turn and the management approaches ushered therein. Starting with the medicalization of employee oversight in the 1970s and continuing with the wellness programs of today's workplace, health has become an important factor in the complex calculus of profitability.[31] Along with exercise and nutrition, sleep and rest are key prescriptions in the neo-Taylorist fashioning of high-functioning workers impervious to burnout. The distinction between human and economic health blurs. "From this perspective," Davies writes, "sleep is not opposed to regimes of production and rationalization, but a necessary ingredient in a life lived productively and rationally. There may be no value to be extracted from sleep, but there is much value to be created from sleep."[32]

This critique is a prescient one, as demonstrated by the appearance two years later of another notable book addressing the state of crisis wherein "sleep deprivation has become an epidemic."[33] Perhaps the surest indication of the difficulty of ascribing to sleep a position of anomalous otherness, an impenetrable bulwark against the prevailing logics of late capitalism, is the publication of *The Sleep Revolution: Transforming Your Life One Night at a Time*, a best-selling self-help book by the power broker, erstwhile media mogul, and now self-proclaimed "sleep evangelist" Arianna Huffington. A brief comparison with *24/7*, notwithstanding the disparities in their targeted readership, is instructive. Similar to Crary, Huffington sounds an alarm on the erosion of sleep in a society of around-the-clock work and hyperconnectivity. "Today a full night's rest has never been more difficult to come by," the introduction declares; the 24/7 world "has imperiled our sleep as never before."[34] She also takes aim at a global capitalist and neoliberalist regime that dismisses the need for rest—not in order to tear down the regime, but rather to show how this dismissal undermines the latter's objectives and self-realization. And like Crary, she draws in the reader with disturbing vignettes of extreme sleep deprivation. But Huffington also includes some horror stories of a different kind. In the United States, insufficient sleep accounts for more than eleven days of lost productivity per year per worker, adding up to a total annual loss to the economy of more than $63 billion. According to one specialist in health care policy, "In an information-based economy, it's difficult to find a condition that has a greater effect on productivity."[35] The book also compiles metrics on the costs to public health and safety entailed by sleep loss, such as a report calculating that sleep disorders cost Australia more than $5 billion per year in health care and other indirect costs. Another startling set of numbers concerns the global market for drugs, technologies, and products powered by the contemporary sleep crisis. The amount of money spent worldwide on sleep aids in 2014 was $58 billion, projected to rise to $76.7 billion by 2019.[36]

The statistics cited by Huffington—which reappear throughout the many other books and articles on this topic—delineate a quantitatively precise picture of the sleep we are missing. Here, too, a logic of transvaluation turns this lack into a plenitude of rewards to be gained by the reader who responds to her exhortation to look after their slumber. The worth of sleep exceeds "the sum of our successes and failures," Huffington insists. "Sleep is a fundamental human need that must be respected. It's one of humanity's great unifiers."[37] And even though it is much more than merely "a tool to help us be better at work, give a better presentation, come up with more ideas in a meeting, score more goals, or put more points on the board," it certainly does not at all hurt that better sleep "will undoubtedly help us do all these things."[38] There is much value to be created from sleep: "properly appraised, our sleeping time is as valuable a commodity as the time we are awake."[39] Sleep must be protected, and even more crucially, sleep is worth investing in. Where

Crary conceives the utter inutility of sleep as a source of resistance, Huffington equates this value proposition with no less than a “sleep revolution.”[40]

Taking these two books as signal exhibits in the ongoing reappraisal of sleep, we find the latter stranded in an oddly ambiguous place—somewhere between waste and value, between a revolt against the dominant order and a top-down revolution. On the one hand, the linking of sleep to a politics of resistance resonates widely in the contemporary landscape, as borne out by the encampments of the Arab Spring, Occupy Movement, and Umbrella Movement; by the worldwide Sleep Out events drawing attention to the crisis of homelessness; and even by the intrepid Patricia Okoumou, who on July 2, 2018, climbed to the base of the Statue of Liberty to protest the federal detention of migrants and, for part of the four hours that transpired before her arrest, took a nap. In parks, squares, streets, and monument sites, sleep has entered the corporeal lexicon of protest—as a reclamation of public space, a disruption of business as usual, and, in the words of Anna Della Subin, “a stance against injustice that is not only nonviolent but as vulnerable, and as noncooperative, as possible.”[41] On the other hand, the remaking of sleep as a monetizable resource, located not outside of late capitalism but well within its bounds as a central concern for its self-improving, self-caring, and always-optimizing subjects cannot be dismissed (and not just because it comes with an endorsement from the chief operating officer of the sixth most highly valued company in the world).[42] To contend with this ambiguity, then, what is required is a more detailed consideration of how power acts upon the body and mediates the relationship between sleep and the orders of waking life. More than and never fully reducible to a preexisting “natural condition” that mounts an impermeable wall against external forces, sleep marks the highly unstable juncture of the body and technologies of power.

Or to make an analogy, our sleep is no more natural than our sex. Such concerns have been taken up by the philosopher Cressida Heyes, who, in a recent interview, raises an intriguing question: has sleep replaced sex in the popular imagination?[43] While sex was once considered a risqué and exciting topic of discussion, today it elicits yawns from her students, who would much prefer to talk about their sleeping problems.[44] There is abundant anecdotal evidence to support Heyes’s hypothesis—from the ways that popular discourse formulates its obsession with certain bedroom activities (how much sleep we are getting, how we can get more, whether it could be better, how to reach deep sleep more quickly), to the return of the waterbed (first sold in 1967 as a model dubbed the Pleasure Pit, today it is hyped for its cradling sensations).[45] Pressing further with this exercise in transposition while also shifting course, we can restate the question thus: does sleep in fact occupy the status previously ascribed to sex by Michel Foucault in *The History of Sexuality?* As sex is already, sleep is now becoming “an object of analysis [and] a target of intervention,” crucially poised “at the boundary line of the biological and the economic domains.” Sleep has assumed a place alongside sex as

"an issue, and a public issue no less; a whole web of discourses, special knowledge, analyses, and injunctions settled upon it."[46] While Foucault saw a "great sexual sermon" sweeping through society, we now glimpse a wave of sleep evangelism, such as that proclaimed by Huffington, which denounces an old regime of inhibition and, with near-religious fervor, heralds a new order: "Tomorrow sex"—and sleep—"will be good again."[47]

The rustlings "of revolt, of promised freedom, of the coming age of a different law" stir this discourse, Foucault writes. His observation applies at a superficial level to *The Sleep Revolution* (to the extent that freedom can be reduced to a individualist notion of self-actualization and thriving within a narrow field of action) and more profoundly to *24/7*. For to look to sleep as a source of true revolt, or a repository of oppositional energies by which the body resists the powers that would capture it, is to advance something along the lines of a repressive hypothesis of sleep. The repressive hypothesis, as Foucault writes about sex, constructs its object "as a natural given which power tries to hold in check." Sex, like its counterpart sleep, is conceived "as a stubborn drive, by nature alien and of necessity disobedient to a power which exhausts itself trying to subdue it and often fails to control it entirely."[48] In opposition to this stubborn drive, power is conceived as a repressive force, operating through mechanisms of negation and exclusion. This form of power is "the power to say no," or "a pure limit set on freedom"; historically rooted in the threat of termination of life, its goal is to produce an obedient body.[49] Foucault goes on to refute the repressive hypothesis, which is blind to the operations of an entire other set of techniques of power. What the history of sexuality shows is that the long-standing mechanisms of prohibition have been joined with and penetrated by newer techniques aimed toward the "incitement and intensification" of the body, with the goal of cultivating its vigor and maximizing its capacities.[50] He writes, "Since the classical age the West has undergone a very profound transformation of these mechanisms of power. 'Deduction' has tended to be no longer the major form of power but merely one element among others, working to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them."[51] Such power endeavors to care for the body rather than to dominate it, by means of exerting a positive influence on its performance. Foucault calls this biopower, whose object is life itself and whose "highest function" is "*to invest life through and through*."[52]

The consideration of sex leads Foucault to an articulation of biopower, an idea on which he would elaborate late in his career. Likewise, through the lens of biopower, another understanding of sexuality comes into focus: "Sexuality is not the most intractable element in power relations, but rather one of those endowed with the greatest instrumentality." It stands out as "an especially dense transfer point for relations of power."[53] Turning back to sleep with this insight in mind, we can

identify a similar set of dynamics. In addition to a proliferation of discourses and new knowledges, sleep comes to be defined also by a thickening tangle of therapeutic interventions and regulatory strategies. Some of these operate in a mode of exclusion—by setting limits on this activity, assigning to it a proper time and place, and distributing it within an ordered system. The time-discipline of the industrial era and the institutionalized workplace continues to shape the way that a large portion of the population sleeps, while to partake of sleep apart from its designated time and place—as in a public space—is a prosecutable offense in many places in the world. Such procedures, however, coexist and overlap with a host of biopolitical techniques whose objective is not to limit sleep but to improve it. In the words of Huffington, "increasingly, getting enough sleep is all about performance—job performance, physical performance, mental performance, athletic performance."[54] The burgeoning array of biotechnological tools that hold out the ability to track and influence our slumber (from tracking apps to drugs, from transcranial induction devices to polysomnography labs), converge toward the end of maximally optimized sleep.

To illustrate this dense transfer in relations of power, let us return to one of Crary's exhibits. The development of stimulants like Provigil to prolong the soldier's wakefulness during continuous operations does not capture the full extent of the military's manipulation of sleep. The "sustained combat operations" warranting the use of such stimulants represent but one element of the "sleep management systems" utilized by the U.S. Armed Forces. As Eyal Ben-Ari demonstrates in his research, these systems arose in the 1990s as a critical component of the military technological apparatus, and their purpose was "enhancing the very bodily and mental capacities of soldiers."[55] In the research reports and command guidelines circulated throughout the organization, the management of sleep is directly linked to maintenance of operational performance. "Sleep sustains battlefield awareness—the sum of mental abilities necessary for effective combat performance," states one document. "Managing sleep to sustain performance is analogous to managing any item of logistic resupply . . . . By and large, commanders understand the value of sleep in sustaining performance. With a few exceptions, most military personnel recognize that total sleep deprivation and brief, fragmented sleep exacts a substantial toll on individual and unit performance."[56] The report goes on to pinpoint the difficulty faced by commanders in accurately gauging the alertness level of their troops, introducing a wrist-worn computational monitor for the collection of individual sleep data and thus anticipating the rise of wearable self-tracking technologies a decade later—bearing out the claim that the soldier is indeed the precursor of the worker and consumer. Contrary to what the drug Provigil implies when considered on its own, many military manuals explicitly advise against interpreting the need for sleep as "a sign of weakness, laziness, or lack of motivation," Ben-Ari notes.[57] For instance, a 2015 "Leader's Guide to Soldier and Crew Endurance" opens with an admonition on the dangers of fatigue

and sleep deprivation. The remainder of the document reads like an extremely technical sleep-hygiene guide, including suggestions like "nap as early and often as possible."[58] Sleep is not suppressed or deferred so much as it is integrated into a calibrated system of command and control.

Beyond the military, the adoption of daytime napping as a means of "logistical resupply" also transpires in the private sector, promoted by leaders who have likewise been persuaded that "sufficient sleep is a uniquely powerful fuel for sustainable performance." The expectation that "sleep will always collide with the demands of a 24/7 universe" is controverted by the normalization of the daytime nap in certain spheres of the economy. In this context, napping is increasingly seen as a key to competitive advantage and a central pillar of a program of alertness maintenance, whether from the viewpoint of managers seeking to boost their operations or of workers seeking to increase their own output. "No single behavior has more power to influence overall well-being and productivity," writes Tony Schwartz, the chief executive of the consultancy firm The Energy Project, founded on the mantra "Manage energy not time."[59] Schwartz explains the math behind the mantra: "Too many of us continue to live by the durable myth that one less hour of sleep gives us one more hour of productivity. In reality, each hour less of sleep not only leaves us feeling more fatigued, but also takes a pernicious toll on our cognitive capacity."[60] That is, the daytime nap realizes a replenishment of capacity rather than a pure subtraction from productive time. The fallout of this lesson can be detected across a variety of institutional spaces, from higher education—such as the University of Pennsylvania, which distributes to its incoming undergraduates an eye mask imprinted with the exhortation to "sleep well"—to the corporation, where napping is increasingly subject to official protocols. As Vern Baxter and Steve Kroll-Smith argue in a study of napping policies across a range of industries, such policies are reflective of "an intensification of work and an extension of the work day that is blurring modern boundaries between what is public and what is private space and time."[61] In the 24/7 era, the act of sleeping on the job undergoes a process of resignification—from a symptom of delinquency to a sign of the worker's "temporal flexibility" and "continuous accessibility for work," or from a failure to obey to a commitment to high performance.[62] In leaving behind the familiar formula of eight hours for work and eight hours for rest, the normalization of the daytime nap illustrates the transfer of relations of power taking place around sleep, conjoining a disciplinary mode of power that partitions in space and orders in time with a biopolitical mode of "continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms."[63] From the perspective of a biopower that targets energy not time, even the time of unconsciousness can be rendered useful, and sleep put to work, by its precise insertion into a system of modulated and variable controls.[64]

Consider, then, the matter of sleeping on the job. Today the phrase might evoke a hypothetical knowledge worker who, in the course of a long day at the office, dutifully refuels their energy with a strategic nap. If this worker is employed by

Google, they might opt to do so in a deluxe programmable "EnergyPod" that cradles its user in a "zero gravity position" while encasing them in a personal bubble of relaxing sounds and controlled light.[65] In this echelon of labor and for this type of worker, whose sleep must be protected to the extent that their cognitive capacities are prized, to sleep on the job is to regulate the body's functions so as to bring them into conformity with organizational imperatives. In other labor contexts, however, the same act can signify dissent rather than conformity, marking a conflictual interplay between opposing interests. In contrast to the hypothetical example above, sleeping on the job was leveraged as a coordinated action by actual factory employees in the industrial zones of Delhi, as reported by a workers' newspaper in 2014. Responding to the management's punitive attitude toward those on the night shift who exhibited signs of fatigue, more than one hundred of their colleagues slept together on the shop floor. "We carried on like this for three nights," the paper reports; "workers in other sections of the factory followed suit. It became a tradition of sorts."[66] The Raqs Media Collective recirculated these events among English-language readers as an example of the "acceleration of linkages and exchanges between workers" taking place in the factories of Faridabad. For those bodies subjected to value calculations and disciplinary regimes particular to this setting, sleep enacts protest in a quiet register, signaling "the gentlest possible refusal of capital's rapacious claim on time and the human body." Thus choreographed as a strike, a stoppage of work, and seizure of space, the decision to sleep on the job becomes a display of collective power and worker unity in the face of exploitation. If these exchanges transform sleep into a political act, the meaning of this act takes shape in a concrete situation, forged in tension with the demands of capital and the state, the Raqs Media Collective insists. Their bosses command them to return to their stations, their political leaders call upon the nation to rise, and meanwhile, "for all practical purposes, the subjects are opaque, oblivious to every command . . . . The more they sleep, the louder is the call to rise."[67] Raqs relates the slumbering masses to the mythical sleeping warrior Kumbhakarna, identifying their sleep with "the revolutionary potential of the cultivated hibernation of a reticent strength, whose awakening has consequences."

A final vignette of sleeping on the job comes from *Dilbar*, a single-channel video installation by Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Chai Siris. Commissioned by the Sharjah Art Foundation for the opening of its newly built Art Spaces and exhibited at the Sharjah Biennial in 2013, the work presents a portrait of a Bangladeshi worker involved in the construction of this very site, Delowar "Dilbar" Hossain. Its opening shot is a close-up of Dilbar lying on his side asleep, and the images that follow track the spaces in which he spends his days, moving between the museum and the shanty-like quarters where the workers reside. Throughout the nine-minute video, Dilbar slumbers—on construction sites littered with scaffolding, in the immaculate corridors of finished galleries, and on his bed, which marks a small spot of personal space in the makeshift quarters. Conveyed in this



FIGURE 6. *Dilbar* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Chai Siris, 2013). Courtesy of Kick the Machine.



FIGURE 7. *Dilbar* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Chai Siris, 2013). Courtesy of Kick the Machine.

"sleeping existence" is the feeling of a life untethered, lonely, and experienced from a remove. The portrait expresses Dilbar's displacement, a condition shared with the million other Bangladeshi migrants living in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at the time, many also employed in construction. Perhaps Dilbar sleeps because he is wiped out by the long hours and strenuous demands of his job, his exhaustion a reflection of the sheer manpower consumed by the UAE's recent building boom in luxury properties, campuses, and art museums. Perhaps his sleep marks the time of waiting and longing for escape, as the artists suggest.[68] This longing responds to the unfree circumstances in which migrant workers like him find themselves—forced into debt bondage, deprived of mobility, and denied basic human rights.[69] If Dilbar is representative of the large invisible population of workers exploited by the Gulf states, then the video returns him to the site of his labor, confronting the museum visitor with his presence. By projecting his slumber onto the structure he had a hand in building, the installation enshrines the exhaustion of worker within the temple of art and slyly monumentalizes the act of sleeping on the job.

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that even while sleep always involves the reminder of a limit or the assertion of a boundary, these lines can themselves be inscribed on tilted planes and shifting sands. A politics of sleep must contend with the specific techniques of power that relate to the time, place, and bodies it involves, situating sleep as a wedge into a particular context, as much as a line of flight from the dominant order. It must likewise proceed from a recognition of the combinatorial possibilities of biopolitical and disciplinary mechanisms,

along with how these are unevenly distributed across the "power chronography" of the contemporary world. This power chronography—as coined by Sarah Sharma to encompass the "multitude of time-based experiences specific to different populations that live, labor, and sleep under the auspices of global capitalism"—determines whose sleep must be protected and who must stay awake in order that others may rest.[70] Sharma offers an important rejoinder that the 24/7 world describes not a universally shared condition arrived at via a singular genealogy of insomniac modernity, but a differential system of "inequitable temporal relations," composed of plural interlocking economies of exhaustion, each with its own history.[71] Sleep occupies multiple positions within this differential system, and this multiplicity dogs the question of what exactly is preserved when sleep is protected. The reparative impulse plays out according to different logics, as the foregoing examples show, from instances that corroborate the rippling effects of a growing market for sleep that fluidly traverses the boundaries between the commodity sector and the experience economy—instantiated in art installations as rarefied editions of the customized sleeping environments that companies provide for their employees or consumers are now encouraged to assemble in their homes—to others that aim for more far-reaching reconfigurations of the social. I conclude this chapter by returning to *Black Womxn Dreaming/Divine the Darkness* as an example of the latter, a work that clarifies the conditions under which sleep can entail "an awakening with consequences."

Black Womxn Dreaming/Divine the Darkness situates sleep at the fulcrum of an art of collaboration and a politics of resistance. The artists call upon sleep as a rejection of capitalist values, a disidentification from its ethic of work, and a limit upon its usurpation of energy, in language that resonates with Crary's vaunting of the "uncompromising interruption of the theft of time from us by capitalism." But at the same time, they expose the shortcomings of a politics of sleep that fails to address how this theft of time and energy toll are unevenly distributed along the lines of race and gender, calling into question the assertion of 24/7 as a straightforwardly common condition. The image of a well-rested Black woman is an unfamiliar sight, Tabor-Smith points out, even in a culture that regularly consumes Black bodies as spectacle. For her, this absence calls to mind the status of African Americans as the most sleep-deprived demographic in the United States. Numerous recent studies have delineated the depth of the "racial sleep gap," attributing it to factors such as environmental safety and noise, the stress of discrimination and economic precarity, and disparities in medical care and treatment.[72] To these factors, Josie Roland Hodson adds "the explosion of incarceration and the criminalizing of everyday life"—with sleep deprivation routinely used in detention as a device of torture—"homelessness and dispossession born of racist housing policies, and hyperexploitative labor conditions that require that Black people work more for less."[73] Thus, coming across an old photograph of a Black woman lying in repose, Hodson is seized by a realization like that of Tabor-Smith. "It occurred to

me then that I had never seen a photograph like this before: a spontaneous image of a Black woman's sleep."[74]

Moreover, Tabor-Smith couches this disparity in relation to histories of racialized labor. She notes that fatigue was widely deployed by slaveholders as an instrument of torture and method of forcing compliance. Chronic sleep deprivation served the purpose not just of extracting the maximum amount of labor from enslaved people, but also maintaining control over them during nonwork hours. Alluding to this practice, Frederick Douglass writes in his diaries, "Sunday was my only leisure time. I spent this in a sort of beast-like stupor, between sleep and wake."[75] Prompted by Tabor-Smith's invocation of the legacies of racial and colonial violence, we can begin to discern another history of sleeplessness, one that bisects capitalism's theft of time with the theft of lands and bodies, and that looks beyond the factory and coffeehouse to the plantation and colony. Accounts of the 24/7 world like Crary's locate its origins in the industrializing West, where the temporal regimes associated with the factory and its system of wage work encroached upon previous patterns of rest, severing these from the natural cycles that shaped premodern agrarian life. For Thompson, too, the time-discipline that imposed standardized limits on sleep was a phenomenon of industrialization, thus a deviation from the rhythms of preindustrial, rural societies. But these divisions—and any nostalgic fantasies they might inspire—break down under a global framing of relations of production that centers the political and economic project of Western colonialism. Such a framing encompasses, along with the factory, the colonial plantation as a mechanism of imperial territorial expansion and ecological disruption, a dispositive of agrarian capitalism and, as Saidiya Hartman has observed, a laboratory of coercive labor practices and techniques of discipline that would circulate across the Atlantic, crisscrossing North and South.[76] Across these locales, between past and present, racial capitalism has relied upon myths of "Black nonsomnia," or what Hodson identifies as "the racialized presupposition of a condition of sleeplessness that has been mapped onto the Black body."[77]

In a 1830 report on the colonies of the Americas, John Gladstone, a prominent British slave owner with sizable properties in British Guiana and Jamaica, referred to "the extensive supplies of sugar and coffee they produce for our consumption (now become almost necessities of life)."[78] As demand for these supplies grew in Europe's markets, so did the profits generated by their trade, resulting in the enrichment of colonial powers. Sugar was among the most lucrative, brutally intensive, and slave-reliant of plantation crops, and its consumption was closely tied to that of coffee and tea. As Mintz writes, "the combination of a nonalcoholic, bitter, calorie-empty stimulant, heated and in liquid form, with a calorie-rich and intensely sweet substance came to mean a whole new assemblage of beverages."[79] And the rise of this stimulating liquid assemblage attests to the location of sleep at the juncture of racially differentiated but conjoined economies of exhaustion. The

transforming architecture of sleep identified by Schmidt therefore links together the denizens of the coffeehouse, hyped up on caffeine and sucrose, and enslaved plantation laborers, pushed to depletion and death. The modern syndrome of sleep deprivation was shadowed by more acutely violent forms of privation and dispossession. These connections bring into view another aspect of the age of sleeplessness, situated at the site of production and residing in a history of enslaved labor that has been sidelined by narratives of global capitalism (by its relegation to a vague prehistory of accumulation) or elided at the point of consumption.

To the extent that sleep debt scales up across individual bodies, to reiterate a point raised at the outset of this chapter, it must be read through this history. That is, sleep debt accumulates in time and in accordance with the ledgers of racial capitalism. Its calculation must take into account what Kathryn Yussof terms a white imperial regime of energy extraction. The latter, she writes, was built upon "the traffic between the *inhuman as matter* and the *inhuman as race*," both treated as extractable, fungible, and transferable energy sources.[80] Thus, Yussof argues, "sugar was the conversion of inhumane slave energy into fuel, then back into human energy, plus inhuman energy, to produce industrialization." The extractive regime "of being energy for others, of putting sugar in the bowl, and in the muscles of white labor" was central to the system of capitalism and the making of the modern world.[81] By bringing these processes to bear upon *Black Womxn Dreaming/Divine the Darkness*, Tabor-Smith points to another dimension of the reparative impulse that animates the project, one oriented toward a historical horizon of reparatory justice. The couching of sleep and rest in response to the call for reparations for past and continuing harms inflicted upon Black people connects *Black Womxn Dreaming* with numerous other recent projects. These include the Nap Ministry, founded in 2016 by Tricia Hersey on the basis that "we believe rest is a form of resistance and name sleep deprivation as a racial and social justice issue"; *Black Power Naps/Siestas Negras*, an installation and initiative by the artists Navild Acosta and Fannie Sosa that addresses sleep deprivation as part of the legacy of extraction and aiming for "the redistribution of rest, relaxation, and down times"; and Experiments in Supine Possibilities, an event organized in 2020 by the Church of Black Feminist Thought (founded by Ra Malika Imhotep and Miyuki Baker), which invited participants to engage in seven days of laying down and heeding "the messages or silences of your body at rest."[82] Experiments in Supine Possibilities asks, "What happens when Abolitionist Strategy emanates from this place as opposed to from militant postures of self-denial?"

Across these projects, the enactment of a politics of sleep unfolds on a collective plane, thus breaking away from individualist approaches to repair, as well as from a notion of sleep as a purely inward turn or a withdrawal from the sphere of intersubjective exchange. To sleep in the presence of others is to willingly abandon the fiction of self-sufficiency and autonomy, in acknowledgment of vulnerability and interdependence. Those who sleep are unable to see themselves and must be

watched over by others, consigned to the protection of those who are awake. *Black Womxn Dreaming* secures such protection through the construction of a commons of sleep by means of the participatory, performative framework of ritual. In its innermost circle, this commons comprised those who responded directly to the invitation extended by the artists. Beyond this group of sleepers, the circle of ritual was opened up further by means of the blessing ceremony described earlier, which gathered the attentions of the attendees to send "a message of ease" to the sleepers; the display of the related installation *Divine the Darkness* at Ashara Ekundayo Gallery; and a twilight procession in downtown Oakland that marked the closing of the episode. Thus, a larger group of participants was brought in to participate indirectly in the commons of sleep, contribute to the web of support sustaining it, and express their solidarity with its political message.

This commons of sleep acquired an even greater resonance in the following year when the COVID-19 pandemic and a series of publicized police murders exposed in stark relief the absence of basic social and legal protections for Black Americans. In the current political landscape, the supine body has emerged as a powerfully charged image, to reiterate a point made by the Church of Black Feminist Thought. It is an emblem of exposure to the lethal force of the police order, a body leveled in death; or one that has been laid low by "depression, fatigue, apathy, chronic pain"—not to mention burnout—"in the face of converging crises."[83] Demonstrations against racist police violence have taken the form of die-ins, with protestors lying down in streets and public buildings. Meanwhile, beyond the public gaze, groups like the Movement for Black Lives tackle the challenges of "activist burnout" amid crises that continue to build and spin out. In these circumstances, restorative rest recalls Audre Lorde's lesson that self-care amounts to "an act of political warfare."[84] Alongside the familiar postures of rising up and standing up (which draw upon what the feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero has identified as a conception of agency fully captive to a vertical geometry of rectitude), another gestural repertoire—one oriented to the horizontal line, the place of refuge and retreat, the "position at the bottom"—enters the frame of the political struggle for racial justice.[85]

The insistence on a role for sleep aligns these projects with a recent strand of feminist thought that prioritizes the recognition of vulnerability and interdependency as a basis for political collectivity. Sleep might serve as the ideal instantiation of such an appeal to vulnerability, as Judith Butler suggests when discussing the revolutionary demonstrations in Tahrir Square during the Arab Spring, where "sometimes the simple act of sleeping there, in the square, was the most eloquent political statement."[86] Responding to these same events, the Egyptian writer Haytham El Wardany asserts that the occupation of public space "is the most extreme expression of the protest movement," and "sleeping while occupying is the true heart of occupation."[87] Butler reads the publicly exposed sleeping body as a reminder of "the ways in which we depend on political and social

institutions to persist," and therefore as a holding to account for this dependency and exposure. Crossing over from private to public, sleep puts the body "on the line" and entails a call to reorganize the social world in a manner that can safeguard its basic needs.[88] Sleeping occupiers, in El Wardany's words, "become the brokers of a new reality."[89] But while *Black Womxn Dreaming* reflects the horizontal orientation of a politics of vulnerability, it also takes a deliberate step back from such tactics of exposure and visibility. It refrained from putting supine sleeping bodies on the line and into public view. Instead, the communal event of slumber remained hidden from view behind a curtain of privacy, while being publicized indirectly and by degrees of remediation. In its careful enfolding of disclosure with reserve, *Black Womxn Dreaming* short-circuited the dynamics of visual confrontation and witnessing set into play by sleeping in public.

In its measures of reserve and withholding from view, *Black Womxn Dreaming* raises important questions about the ways that exposure might not enable, but rather hinder, a reparative politics of sleep. Contained in this reserve is a caution: if access to rest is unevenly and inequitably distributed, then sleep must not be idealized as the gateway to a common, biologically leveled humanity. Even vulnerabilities that are shared by all will weigh upon different bodies to different degrees; vulnerability is allowed to or inflicted upon disparate groups in varying measures. A turn to a counterexample provides an entry into *Black Womxn Dreaming*'s navigation of such concerns. This comparison takes off from the work's status as an artistic intervention as much as a political one. Integrating the activity of slumber as part of a choreographed event (of which the "ritual" represents a specific modality), the project evokes a strand of performance involving the enactment of sleep. For instance, one recent work that sits squarely within what can be called a performance art of sleep is *The Maybe*, by the artist Cornelia Parker and the actor Tilda Swinton, in which the slumbering body is presented in accordance with the art museum's traditional methods of display and in conformity with a long-standing iconography of the aesthetically idealized female figure. At the first exhibition of this piece in 1995, Swinton slept inside a large glass vitrine at London's Serpentine Gallery: the unconscious woman placed on exhibit as a precious object. Swinton kept up this performance for eight hours a day during seven consecutive days, matching the duration of *Black Womxn Dreaming*. Aesthetic admiration therefore shades into respect for the sheer physical and mental stamina required to withstand such a prolonged pose and scrutiny. Swinton's feat calls to mind a host of other works that have similarly engaged sleep as part of an extreme performance that overwrites its associations with ease and rest, recoding it in terms of endurance and discipline. The tightrope of extreme inertia and superlative willpower upon which she balances calls to mind, for instance, Chris Burden's *Bed Piece* (1972), in which the artist laid on a bed in a gallery for twenty-two continuous days.[90] Says Burden, "I wanted to force [them] to deal with me by presenting myself as an object. But I'm not an object, so there'd be this

moral dilemma." The body on the line is simultaneously caught up in a precarious balancing act between personhood and objecthood, suspended between a withdrawn subjectivity and an object status to which that body cannot be reduced, as Burden confidently asserts.

Notwithstanding its performative dimension, *Black Womxn Dreaming* disengages from this strand of heroic sleep performance, along with the mythos of individual exceptionalism into which it feeds and the institutionalized aesthetic economies upon which it relies. This distance inscribes the difference between a spectacle of sleep, centered upon the artist as performer, and a commons of sleep, unfolding through communal participation. In so doing, it also raises the crucial question of whether the wager of objecthood so boldly assumed by the performance artist merits the risk for those subject to techniques of racialization that systematically deprive them of the status of personhood. If the question of race hovers only at the margins of *The Maybe*—hinted at with its evocation of stories of sleeping beauties who are as white as snow—it is central to *Black Womxn Dreaming*. Sleep must be protected, but what about the sleep of those for whom social protections do not reliably function in the first place, such as the Black women and girls whose well-being constitutes the main impetus for *House/Full of Black Women?* The project centers the bodies of those for whom the visibility of sleeping in public—along with other ordinary activities like driving, running, walking, eating, talking, and so on—can likely elicit reactions of violent erasure. Consider the example of Lolade Siyonbola, a graduate student at Yale University who in 2018 was subject to an interrogation by four police officers as a result of taking a nap in the common room of her dormitory during an all-nighter, after being reported by another student. Despite widespread university efforts to address sleep deprivation in the student population—which extend to the creation of napping zones in libraries, dorms, and other campus spaces—Siyonbola's nap was met with the charge of criminality. A more disturbing example that transpired in the work's aftermath is that of Breanna Taylor, shot dead by police while at home in her bedroom, echoing a history of civil rights leaders killed by police at night in their beds. The targeting of Black Americans by systems of surveillance and state violence nullifies the sanctity of sleep along with any meaningful distinction between private and public.

It is precisely "because black female subjects are not granted social, culture, or legal privacy," Jennifer Nash writes, that the private becomes for them a site of self-cultivation, opposition, and "potential liberation."[91] In response to such unremitting exposure to the policing gaze, Black women have historically developed practices of dissemblance, fugitivity, opacity, and invisibility, for the purposes of securing safety and "the sanctity of an inner life."[92] These practices demand a rethinking of default distinctions between the public as the realm of political action and the private as apolitical, between active and passive resistance. *Black Womxn Dreaming* assumes a position in this lineage of practices, carving out a

commons of sleep that is also an enclosure, or a space in which bodies are at once held and withheld. Its politics of sleep is informed by the Black feminist concept of the retreat—defined by Tina Campt as a strategy of inward escape, a place to "dream of possibility from within impossible strictures," and a transformation that begins in the dark.[93] Turning to sleep as a mode of retreat, *Black Womxn Dreaming* taps its incubatory powers.

PART I

REGARDING SLEEP

3

Into the Dark

Apichatpong's 2015 feature film *Cemetery of Splendor* takes its narrative premise from news reports that circulated in Thailand a few years earlier about a group of soldiers quarantined in a hospital in the country's north, afflicted with a mysterious sleeping sickness.[1] Picking up on this stranger-than-fiction scenario, the film begins with accommodations that are made in response to a pathological outbreak of hypersomnia within the ranks of the military. An old schoolhouse in Khon Kaen is converted into a clinic in which to sequester the unconscious afflicted. "The soldiers just sleep," and "the army doesn't know what to do with them," a nurse comments; and so the clinic's workers simply look after their slumber and attend to them during their brief, sporadic periods of waking. The film's story follows the relationships that develop between one of the soldiers, Itt; a woman who works as a volunteer at the clinic, Jen; and Keng, a psychic who has been retained to help the soldiers' loved ones to communicate with them by reading their minds. Jen and Itt grow closer, and her sleep patterns shift, as if synchronizing with those of the soldiers. Meanwhile, the curious epidemic of sleeping sickness remains an unexplained mystery and a structuring cause that accrues layers of significance in the course of the film.

Viewers already familiar with Apichatpong's filmmaking will recognize in *Cemetery of Splendor* elements from his previous work. For instance, cast in the role of Itt is the actor Banlop Lomnoi, who also played a soldier in one of his early feature films, *Tropical Malady* (*Sud Pralad*, 2004). The setting of the clinic echoes the hospitals in which *Syndromes and a Century* (*Sang Sattawat*, 2006) takes place, and motivates scenes that recall that film's depiction of humorous exchanges among doctors and patients. Moreover, *Cemetery*'s portrayal of characters in unconscious states is anticipated by his previous works, in which the act of sleeping regularly occupies the image, takes its time, and exercises a claim upon the audience's attention. Itt, the other sleeping soldiers, and Jen (who eventually also becomes infected) find their counterparts throughout his filmography, which is filled with



FIGURE 8. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).

characters caught dozing in bedrooms or hotel rooms, *en plein air*, and in the partial shelter of caves or under shaded pavilions known as *salas*. *Blissfully Yours* concludes with a nearly four-minute-long single take of a pair of lovers gently dozing by a stream in the jungle. Another long take of a sleeping character—Tong, a young man with whom Lomnoi's soldier falls in love—marks the exact midpoint of *Tropical Malady*, while also serving as the hinge upon which the film pivots from a realistic tale of romance to a fantastical jungle fable. Both the acclaimed feature *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* and the short film *Mekong Hotel* (2012) are replete with supine bodies and relationships that unfold along a plane of horizontality, among characters who share stories and memories with one another as they slide in and out of sleep. The depth of the bonds between friends, lovers, and kin is revealed as their exchanges extend into moments of grogginess, states of illness, and interludes of vulnerability and incapacity. In the pauses and silences of sleep, dimensions of their shared histories are illuminated, giving rise to a vivid picture of "sociality at the edges of consciousness."[2]

In devoting so much screen time to sleep, Apichatpong contravenes standard ideas about what counts as meaningful action in cinema. Considered within the framework of narrative filmmaking, slumber and rest would seem to embody the very negation of drama, as paradigmatic instances of the dead time that is typically eliminated in the process of editing. Sleep, as a pause in purposive action, would seem to detract from the momentum and movement that are vital to narrative progression. In his body of work, however, the conventional coding of sleep as inactivity is turned on its head. The uncommon visibility accorded to sleep accompanies a keen sensitivity to the most ordinary and inescapable aspects of the animal existence of human beings. Apichatpong trains his camera on the acts of sleeping,

eating, drinking, excreting, exercising, working, loafing, praying, chatting, and so on. Narrative momentum decelerates as gestures, moments, and physical details break free from the designs of storytelling, assuming an amplified presence and weight. The contours of plot dissolve into the rhythmic repetition of these baseline actions and reconstitute in new and unfamiliar forms, which blur the line between active doing and passive being. In the cinematic worlds constructed by Apichatpong, sleep asserts a material presence, confronting the audience with a fundamental given of living in a body while also raising the question of how this bodily life is organized by society and enmeshed in a biocultural-technical matrix. Watching these films and regarding sleep in contexts that are by turns homely, unhomely, safe, uncomfortable, and exposed, we find ourselves prompted to consider sleep carefully as an index of security, status, resources, belonging, and trust.

Not only do scenes of sleep recur across Apichatpong's films, but so does a specific compositional placement of the somnolent body. In the scene dividing the two halves of *Tropical Malady*, Tong lies in a bed positioned in the foreground of the shot, partly bathed in sunlight that streams in from one of the bedroom windows. A window on the wall behind him, directly facing the camera and dominating the upper half of the image, opens onto a landscape of vibrant green and brings a deeper field into the frame. This compositional pattern—with variations on the basic elements of sleeper, room, aperture, and light source—reappears from film to film: *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, in which Jen slumbers as the bright sunlight refracts in the soft folds of the mosquito net encasing her bed; *Mekong Hotel*, in which curtains block the sun and river view from the hotel rooms in which the characters lounge; and in numerous instances in *Cemetery of Splendor*, as the film circles back repeatedly to the clinic that houses Itt and the other hypersomniac soldiers. The staging of the scene of sleep establishes a visual dialogue between obscurity and illumination, inside and outside, dormant figures closed in upon themselves and openings toward other spaces or planes.

The trail of this repeating pattern does not end with Apichatpong's productions for the big screen, but also extends into other domains of his practice as a filmmaker and artist. Echoing the images described above is a shot from his 2001 experimental film *Haunted Houses*, showing a woman napping on a bare wooden pallet bed next to a neatly folded stack of bed rolls, with an open window behind her. The woman is one of several villagers from the rural region near the filmmaker's childhood home who accepted his invitation to act in the film and allowed him to shoot inside their houses. *Haunted Houses* is composed of a series of reenactments of scenes from *Tong Prakaisad*, a wildly popular televised soap opera that "mainly deals with love and the problems of the wealthy."[3] The piece cycles through a series of homes that stand in for the "several million houses in the country" that are "haunted" every evening by the eight o'clock broadcast of *Tong Prakaisad*, with various villagers taking turns at playing the soap opera's characters.[4] Thus, the film develops an ironic contrast between mass-produced boudoir fantasies and



FIGURE 9. *Tropical Malady* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2004).



FIGURE 10. *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2010).



FIGURE 11. *Mekong Hotel* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2012).



FIGURE 12. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).



FIGURE 13. *Haunted Houses* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2001). Courtesy of Kick the Machine.

material realities. At the same time, the strategy of reenactment does not aim solely for a critique of popular media; it also gives rise to "a more open-ended exploration of village life," as Maeve Connolly argues.[5] Both of these dimensions can be glimpsed in this scene of sleep.

Revisiting the imagery of the video installation *Dilbar* with these other examples in mind, we can readily recognize a repetition of motifs while also grasping the significance of changes to the pattern—as in the shot of Dilbar sleeping by a window in one of the newly constructed galleries of the Sharjah Art Foundation. He leans against a bare wall, without a bed or any other provisions for comfort, in a room devoid of any traces of human presence, under the glare of the sun. The staging of sleep here conveys his alienated relationship to this cosmopolitan art space as a migrant construction worker, along with the conditions of social isolation, exclusion, and material privation in which the UAE's migrant workers live and labor. Dilbar's slumber suggests the weariness of abiding these conditions, bringing into view the adjacency of sleep and exhaustion, both representing "an indeterminate state of abeyance, of lassitude, torpor." Thus, Dilbar belongs to what Elena Gorfinkel identifies as a cinematic archive of "tired bodies," one that renders "perceptible otherwise imperceptible experiences of the ordinary endurance of bodies on the margins."[6] The question of endurance and survival hovers over the image of Dilbar asleep in bed in his quarters, with an expanse of wall behind him where we might expect to find a window. Its blankness speaks to the plight that provokes Dilbar's prolonged sleep—a hibernation that stands for "the act of waiting and the desire for escape," in Apichatpong's words—and evokes the barriers that stand in the way of achieving escape and accessing relief.

Connections like these serve as a reminder of the sizable body of experimental short films and installation works produced by Apichatpong alongside the feature films that have brought him international renown. His earliest films—*Bullet* and *0116643225059*, both from 1994—were 16mm shorts made during his years as a graduate student at the Art Institute of Chicago. From this time until the present, he has maintained a continuous practice in experimental filmmaking. For



FIGURE 14. *Dilbar* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Chai Siris, 2013). Courtesy of Kick the Machine.

the most part, these works circulate outside the distribution networks and exhibition venues that support his more highly publicized feature productions, instead playing to smaller audiences in museums, art spaces, and avant-garde programs. Nonetheless, these disparate areas of his practice cohere around common themes, images, and sounds. For instance, *Tropical Malady*'s portrayal of the jungle as an alternative order of reality is repeated in *Worldly Desires* (2005), an experimental piece structured as a film-within-a film. The gently meandering melody played by a single guitar throughout *Mekong Hotel* is heard again in the experimental short *Sakda (Rousseau)* (2012), which also returns to the same hotel by the river. And the single, continuously tracking shot that comprises most of the kinetic short *The Anthem* (2006) is preceded by a brief scene that will induce déjà vu for many viewers of Apichatpong's feature films. In it, a group of women breezily chat and snack on fruits under the shade of a *sala*. The *sala* as a fixture of Thai public space, and the leisurely gatherings that it affords, are recurring elements in the social geography described by his feature films, while the women themselves are actors from these films. A small group of nonprofessionally trained actors—Jenjira Pongpas, Banlop Lomnoi, and Sakda Kaewbuadee—appears consistently throughout Apichatpong's moving-image works, such that faces and personas echo across individual projects. Moreover, the same core production team collaborates on the majority of his productions, whether they are large-scale feature productions or small-scale films and videos. This team includes cinematographer Sayombhu Mukdeeprom, editor Lee Chatametikool, and sound designer Akritchalerm Kalayanamitr.

Beyond making work in the vein of experimental and avant-garde cinema, Apichatpong has also created a large number of moving-image pieces for gallery settings, works that incorporate multiscreen installations, various techniques of projection, and uniquely designed exhibition environments. In the same year of the release of his first feature-length film, *Mysterious Object at Noon* (*Dogfahr*

Nai Meu Marn, 2000), Apichatpong also showed his first video installation in an art exhibition. Since then, his installation works have been exhibited in a steady stream of group and solo shows, at venues in Southeast Asia, East Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and North America, including major international exhibitions such as Documenta and the Venice Biennale.[7] These crossings between the spheres of film and art call to mind the example of other filmmakers who have similarly expanded their practice to include moving- image installations, such as Agnès Varda, Chantal Akerman, and Abbas Kiarostami. Yet Apichatpong's position also differs in notable ways from an earlier generation whose entry into the spaces of art was paved by the success they had already achieved as directors, on the one hand, and cemented with a turn toward cinema in contemporary art during the 1990s, on the other hand. In contrast to them, Apichatpong stepped into a cultural field already reconfigured by cinema's relocation from the black box to the white cube. From the very outset of his career, he produced an artistic and filmic corpus concurrently and along parallel tracks, such that to map the dissemination of his total output requires conjoining the network of international film festivals with that of the global art world. In contrast to those who precede him in their travels between art cinema and art exhibition, Apichatpong stands apart for his active presence and prominent stature on the contemporary art scene, based on his work with not only film and video, but also photography, light, sound, performance, and specific sites.

The dearth of critical writing that places Apichatpong's films into conversation with his art is a testament to the institutional divides that shape his reception, if not his practice. But as his reputation grows in each of these spheres—buttressed by accolades like the Palme d'Or awarded to *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* in 2010 and the Artes Mundi prize recognizing his contribution to contemporary art in 2019—it casts a larger shadow upon the other. Recent exhibitions have brought together in one place works that previously circulated through separate outlets—such as the Tate Modern's 2016 exhibition of the multichannel installation *Primitive* (2009), accompanied by an extensive program of his feature and short films in the museum's Starr Cinema. The retrospective solo exhibition *Apichatpong Weerasethakul: The Serenity of Madness*, curated by Gridthiya Gaweewong, lays out an overview of his entire corpus from 1994 to 2016, bringing together his experimental shorts and installations with scripts, drawings, and reference materials from his feature films. Included in the retrospective is a screening program of newly restored short films, as well as several experimental films that have been reworked by Apichatpong for display in the gallery instead of the film theater. His approach to the exhibition as not merely an occasion for the display of previous works, but also a prompt for their evolving transformation, carries over to the installations in the show, which are also presented in new configurations and combinations. Describing the techniques and forms of projection he devised specially for *The Serenity of Madness*, Apichatpong emphasizes their effect of recreating his projects: "I feel that it's like a new project. It's not a film, it's not even an installation. It's like a newly edited piece, become a singular new experience."[8]

The view expressed here affirms the permeability that May Adadol Ingawanij and David Teh have identified as a conceptual key or a "password" for Apichatpong's practice. His work endures by way of a multiform, rather than a fixed, existence, crossing over categories as it moves between old and new iterations. The repetition of specific motifs and ideas also renders his films and installations permeable to one another, so much that the titles of certain works (*Ablaze, Windows, Unknown Forces, The Importance of Telepathy*, to name just a few) might well be applied to other works whose key elements they name. Common sources and lines of exploration carve out additional open channels—as in the examples of *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* and *Primitive*, a multichannel installation that stands out as one of his most ambitious projects. These works both originate in a book alluded to in the film's title, written by a monk about a man named Boonmee who could remember the lives he lived in his previous incarnations. Inspired by this text, Apichatpong and his crew traveled to Boonmee's homeland in the northeast province of Isaan, searching for his descendants and collecting stories about the region's turbulent political history from its inhabitants. The encounters and materials generated by this research trip make up the core of both works, such that Apichatpong considers *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* to be fully "a part of the *Primitive* project." The two are linked together, permeable to one another, as branches of an integral endeavor to research past lives, resurrect regional memories, and investigate a history of brutal military violence targeting northeast Thailand as a locus of communist insurgency.[9] The memorial aspect of the project is at the same time cut through by a sense of premonition, Ingawanij notes, responding to a contemporary political climate marked by the "resurgence of reactionary forms of royalist nationalism."[10]

Cemetery of Splendor, also shot in the Isaan province, continues this reflection on the lingering traces of past political conflicts and the burden of national history that weighs upon present generations. As Jen eventually learns, the schoolhouse-turned-hospital sits on top of an ancient cemetery of kings, upon land once strewn with the corpses of warring armies and villagers. The soldiers will never recover from their sleeping sickness because the spirits of the kings below are siphoning off their energy to continue fighting their battles in the netherworld. Thus, turmoil and threat infuse the film's quiet scenes of slumber, sending ominous ripples across their serene surfaces, analogous to the invisible pathogen. The association between fictional narcotic malady and real political danger is further cemented by the context of the film's making—shortly after May 2014, when Thailand's elected prime minister was deposed in a coup d'état and replaced by a military junta. Apichatpong relates *Cemetery of Splendor* to the feeling of powerlessness spreading in the wake of the country's authoritarian turn and an attendant disorienting atmosphere of unreality, in which it feels unclear "whether you are asleep or awake."[11] And in the years since the film's release, with mounting tensions in Thailand's politics—as the ruling junta intensifies its repression of opposing voices, and as protests against the military and monarchy gain in mass—the theme of sleep has emerged as an even more prominent element of his work. The two main characters who are overtaken by sleep

in *Cemetery of Splendor*, like apparitions who will not be nailed down in space and time, reappear in subsequent projects. These include *Fireworks (Archives)* (2014, a single-channel video shot at Sala Kaew Ku Temple, which also serves as a location in *Cemetery*); *Fever Room* (2015, a stunning "projection performance" involving multiple projections on screens that shift their position in space, sounds distributed precisely on multiple channels, strobe lights, artificial fog, and physical props); *Invisibility* (2016, a two-channel video installation); and the experimental short film *Blue* (2018). The continuities across these projects reflect a shift in Apichatpong's method, from approaching each film as a self-contained, completed object to treating it as "platform" from which other works can be built or a "satellite" within a larger universe, such that "it all ends up being one piece; all together."[12]

Fever Room commences in a theater in which all the sources of light have been extinguished (including exit and safety lights). The total darkness is broken by a single projector that casts a familiar image: a room with a bed in the lower half of the frame, overlooked by a wall of windows opening onto a tree-lined street. The first "act" of the performance picks up where *Cemetery of Splendor* left off, bringing Jen and Itt back together in a hospital that recalls the film's setting. Jen's voice describes a series of places and scenes that are shown on a single screen; among these are several that can be recognized as locations from the film, and Itt repeats her words as if following along with her visions. This exchange is followed by close-up shots of each of them in bed with their eyes closed, as if to suggest that we overhear a conversation taking place in their dreams. The flow of images quickens, with additional screens making an entrance and composing a complex montage of views. The projected world widens out to reference imagery from other previous works—the waters of the Mekong River, echoing scenes from *Mekong Hotel;* a group of young men, reminiscent of the local youth captured in *Primitive*, who gaze at the rushing waters as if waiting for something to arrive; a cave, like the one in which *Uncle Boonmee* ends—while periodically returning to the two sleepers. In *Invisibility*, the silhouettes of the two actors can be clearly discerned among the layered moving shadows that appear side by side on the installation's two channels, interspersed with textual intertitles. Actions play in repeating loops, like Itt sitting up in a bed or Jen nodding off while she sits, suggestive of their confinement to a room "with no way out" except for routes that wind inward into their minds.[13] And in the short film *Blue*, Jenjira is shown lying in a bed in the middle of a jungle; replacing the architectural feature of the window view is a large translucent screen onto which a fire casts its reflection, creating layered compositions. Jenjira tosses and turns, seemingly too troubled to sleep, but neither does she react when her blanket appears to catch on fire. The flames continue to grow, like a mounting alarm that goes unnoticed. These projects—building from a central premise wherein "the people take refuge in dreams while their land is on a brink of collapse, echoing Thailand's present state of military dictatorship"—develop variations on a scenario of uncontrolled sleep. In so doing, they charge the act of sleep—and the problem of awakening—with a sense of political urgency.[14]



FIGURE 15. *Fever Room* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015). Courtesy of Kick the Machine.



FIGURE 16. *Invisibility* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2016). Courtesy of Kick the Machine.



FIGURE 17. *Blue* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2018).

Revisited and reworked in so many instances, the scenario emerges as a kind of reflexive, degree-zero tableau in Apichatpong's work—not just a locus of accumulating thematic associations and political implications, but also a distillation of the formal and ontological concerns animating this work. The scene of sleep breaks down into a set of core elements—contrasting zones of shadow and luminescence, enclosures and apertures, a figure held in hypnotic thrall—that constitute a baseline from which his practice extends across media and permeates the boundaries between them. Furthermore, these core elements correlate with the components of cinema's exhibitionary apparatus, as the initial image of *Fever Room* invites us to consider. The bank of windows that allows light into the dim bedroom occupies a position corresponding to that of the rectangular screen inside the dark theater, which likewise frames a view. The window illuminates the bedroom just as the screen lights up the dark auditorium; the luminous source within the image establishes the conditions in which the audience can see. With this doubling between the space in the film and that of the audience, we are also invited to project ourselves into the place of the sleeper who is positioned just below the edge of the shot. As *Fever Room* returns to the scene of sleep, it reassembles these elements into novel configurations, engendering an expanded, exploded audiovisual experience of multiplied projection surfaces, oscillations between visual and haptic sensations, and disorienting immersion. At some points, the arrangement of screens echoes the composition within single images, as with a pair of screens depicting Itt asleep in the one below and a landscape image in the one above, thus contributing to the dynamic relationships between two- and three-dimensional space, between the projected image and its material support. These relationships are also activated in *Blue:* in the film's final shot, the screen that reflects the image of flames is simultaneously positioned as a transparent window framing a view of Jenjira in bed.

Such permutations of sleep point to continuities between Apichatpong's most recent projects and his earliest experimental films, with their formally reductive, reflexive tendencies. A striking example of the latter is *Windows* (1999). This piece was prompted by Apichatpong's discovery of the bouncing of sunlight between the lens of the video camera he was trying out for the first time, a nearby television screen, and a window in the same room. At once rigorous in its simplicity and playfully spontaneous in its construction, both photographic and abstracted, *Windows* is an "improvisation" in which the micromovements of the filmmaker's body create reflections of light that shudder, flicker, and dance. In the version of *Windows* shown as part of *The Serenity of Madness*, the image is projected onto a translucent screen that can be seen (and seen through) from both sides, imbuing the work with a sculptural presence. In my viewing of *Windows* at the Sullivan Galleries at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the patterns of light playing on the screen were mirrored on the polished concrete floor, adding to the intensity and intricacy of the film installation's flicker effects. The window within the film

illuminated the dark space of the gallery as well, making the latter's physical features a part of the interplay of reflecting surfaces.

The transitional zone between waking and sleeping, light and darkness, grounds an inquiry into cinema as a medium constituted in the combination, and inventive recombinations, of controlled and concentrated illumination, reflective surfaces and projections. At certain points, Apichatpong's comments even suggest an effort to surpass cinema entirely by directly wiring the action of light into the neuro-perceptual circuitry of vision, thereby bypassing the camera-made image: "Better than cinema is the light itself. Our eyes, our brain is the best projector that is constantly interplaying with light."[15] This biomechanical medium-consciousness, and the speculative possibilities toward which it gestures, informs the diegetic world of *Cemetery of Splendor*. The patients in the sleep clinic are each hooked up to a machine specially designed "to help them sleep with good dreams," along with more realistic instruments like catheters and oxygen masks. The machine, a curved vertical tube of light reminiscent of minimalist sculpture, emits a luminescence of continuously cycling colors—blue, violet, pink, red, and green. With each return to the setting of the clinic in the course of the film—to the soldiers inanimate in their sound repose, bathed in an otherworldly radiance, unable to disconnect from the projectors in their heads—the scene of sleep appears more surreal, portentous, and oddly animated. It radiates with disquiet even despite its stillness, intimating hidden movements and invisible agencies. These implications cling to one of the film's most indelible images: a long shot of the clinic at night, silent except for the humming of electric ceiling fans and motionless except for the waves of light seeping through the tubes that seem to stand sentry over the soldiers. Bracketed by cross-fades so that it seems to hover out of space and time, at once realistic and artificial, and held for an extremely long duration, the shot stands out as the keynote of *Cemetery of Splendor*, distilling its poetics and politics of sleep. As the colors gently cycle, they also ooze beyond the clinic into the surrounding spaces, and perhaps into the heads of the film's spectators. The miasma of hypnosis spreads.

In an interview from 2016, Apichatpong refers to the cemetery as an analogy for the way his recent projects draw upon regional histories. A cemetery is a kind of reanimated archive—not just "a tomb of records that are dead," he says, but also a field of "weeds and plants that continue to grow in the audience's mind. I am curious when memories, narratives, especially violent ones, are planted [in various spots] and a new generation, the visitors, absorbs them."[16] It is fitting, then, that *Cemetery of Splendor* does not exhume the bones of the ancient kings or resuscitate their stories as its narrative project, much as *Primitive*'s aim is not the retrieval and display of the past events that inspire it. Instead, the past enters the present as altered forms of life fertilized by its decaying remains, with the insistence of weeds pushing up through the soil or the irrepressibility of dream visions permeating the minds of the living. Memories are not so much excavated as they are reactivated,

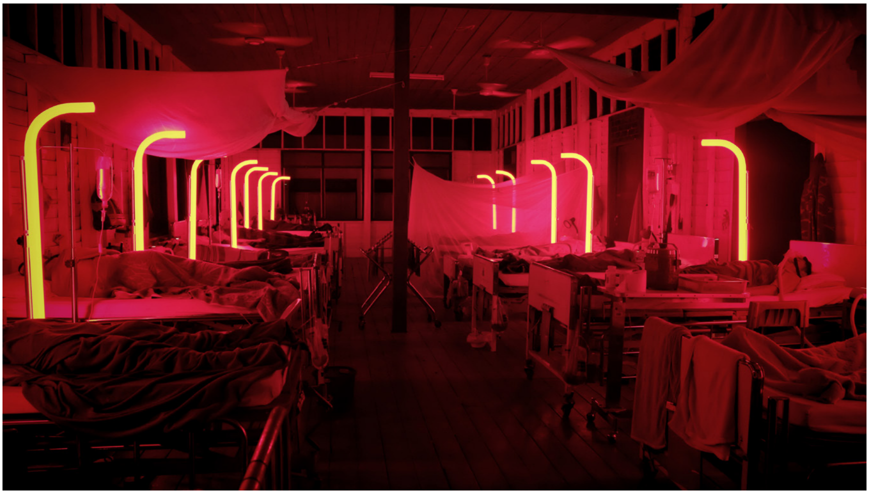


FIGURE 18. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).

bleeding into the cracks between waking and sleeping life as they are handed from one generation to the next. It is also appropriate that, notwithstanding its strikingly anti-naturalistic lighting effects, *Cemetery of Splendor* otherwise eschews stylized representations of dreaming such as dissolves or photographic distortions. It does not lead its audience through the passageway from physical reality into the mental landscape of the dream. Rather, it leaves them to stand before the wall of slumber, regarding unconscious bodies that neither look back nor communicate. (This is true even in the scene that might be interpreted as the film's only "dream sequence," as I discuss in chapter five.) Breaking from a tradition of filmmaking that champions the claims of dreams upon waking life by giving them visual form, building on a long-held affinity between the oneiric and the cinematic, *Cemetery of Splendor* does not actualize the dreams of its characters in the image. The figure of the sleeper is presented as a sign of something else that remains as yet inaccessible.

A comparison helps to focalize the film's distinctive strategies. Turning to a different realm of contemporary cinema, we find in *Inception* (Christopher Nolan, 2010) another film that is full of sleeping bodies, populated by characters who are immobile and unconscious for a good part of the narrative. The film takes place in a future time of high-stakes corporate espionage and neural technology that enables spies to enter and reshape other people's dreams for the purpose of extracting valuable secrets from their unconscious. *Inception*'s story transpires largely within the simulacral dreamscapes constructed by its characters, where their dream-selves do battle with the fortified defenses of their victims. For brief moments throughout, the film pulls back to the scene of sleep. These moments serve as narrative way stations, providing pauses for breath amid the frenetic action taking place in each dream sequence, and also as anchoring points, or bookmarks in space and

time that enable the audience to orient itself in the film's complex architecture of nested dream narratives. The scene of sleep functions as a juncture between narrative levels and a switching mechanism by which the characters enter further into dreams-within-dreams and then find their way back (or not) to waking reality. But despite this important structural function, *Inception* is less interested in sleep than in dreams as illusions that substitute for, compete with, and finally threaten to obliterate the consciousness of its characters.

In a similar fashion, *Cemetery of Splendor* penetrates far into the realm of dreams, so far as to lead the audience to question the ontological stability of the reality they have left behind. But here we find nothing so clear cut as a contest between opposing realities that compete for our belief. Rather, the film is the antithesis of *Inception*, less about the sway of illusions (and computer-generated imagery) than the enigma of the other lives inhabited in sleep and dreams. Instead of a reality overwritten by simulated illusions, *Cemetery of Splendor* presents a physical world encircled, undergirded, and overwritten by another reality that is never visually represented but still affects the actions of the characters and the perceptions of the audience. If that which lies beyond the zones of waking life never coalesces into a tangible picture, it nonetheless makes its presence felt in the form of a constant displacing pressure. This pressure acts in the manner of a translucent overlay, a subtle vibration that blurs the contours of the picture. "The motion of otherwise imperceptible life forces in the existing world" makes itself felt, in the words of Ingawanij.[17] Sleep permeates the diegetic world like a wind: it sets things into motion, stirs up forces that impel the action and events of the film, and challenges the viewer to try to follow the melting lines of its obscure causality. In its refusal to directly visualize the territories of sleep or to frame them by means of explicit transitions, *Cemetery* preserves a palpable tension between the sleeping and waking worlds, cultivating a persistent sense of something more or yet to be discerned. A shadow hovers over the most sunlit spaces, such that these become, as Ingawanij observes, somehow "altered or existentially uncertain" despite being presented in a realistic mode.[18] When borders are hazy and levels of reality undelineated, the direction of awakening remains unclear.

For Apichatpong, dreaming is not all that occupies those who slumber. Sleep holds forth the possibility of recovering forgotten memories—and not just one's own memories but those that stem from previous lives (as in the case of Uncle Boonmee). Sleep might even bring about an immersion in memories that belong to others; indeed, the very question of belonging becomes ambiguous as the sleeping body becomes possessed by ancient spirits, as with the characters in *Cemetery of Splendor*. In this regard, sleep intertwines with other phenomena that appear with regularity in Apichatpong's work: possession, transmutation, and reincarnation. His conception of sleep reflects, on the one hand, what Arnika Fuhrmann has identified as a Buddhist cosmology of "commingling divergent temporalities," constituted in an unceasing process of rebirth after death in another kind of body

(a process governed by karma).[19] On the other hand, his work does not straightforwardly transmit the doctrines of Thailand's official religion of Theravada Buddhism. Rather, it is steeped in what Fuhrmann qualifies as "a vernacular, quotidian, and frequently entirely nondoctrinal Buddhism" that shades into more locally inflected knowledge systems with roots in pre-Buddhist cosmology.[20] An example of the nondoctrinal worldviews suffusing his work is the animistic ontology that, in Ingawanij's definition, grasps "the permeability of human and nonhuman worlds" and understands "the self as porous with respect to a multiplicity of life forms."[21] As much as all life is inseparable from afterlife, so the latter can assume a variety of forms. Thus, we encounter humans who metamorphose into strange beasts, as in *Tropical Malady*, and goddesses who appear as regular women in *Cemetery of Splendor; Uncle Boonmee*'s cast of characters includes a ghost, an ape man, a talking catfish, and characters whose spirits temporarily dissociate from their bodies and wander away.

Situated within these ontological frameworks, the activity of sleep implies, in the broadest possible sense, a loosening of the firm edges of identity and a projection of the self beyond its usual borders into other territories and states of being. Implicated in the boundary between waking and sleeping are other boundaries—between different life forms, the material and the immaterial, past and future lives. To sleep is to enter a temporal zone that exceeds an individual lifespan, unfolding into what Apichatpong describes as "an infinite span of time" in which entities can "trade places" and transform.[22] This zone is marked by transferences of energy between the dead and the living, along with an unimpeded circulation and exchange of memories. Sleep dissolves divisions and opens up passageways. If its effect on the living is to freeze them in a temporary state of suspended animation, it is also to reawaken and reanimate the dead.

The psychogeographies visited in dreams are therefore invested with historical and political as well as personal meanings. In Apichatpong's treatment, sleep is positioned on a continuum with other popular practices of representing, interpreting, and transmitting the past. The suggestion that the peaceful slumber of the soldiers in *Cemetery of Splendor* masks a nightmare of phantom wars can be related to the phenomenon of spirit possession in this region of the world. More than just a remnant of ancient traditions, Ashley Thompson argues, this phenomenon constitutes a "powerful syncretic force in the present."[23] To manifest the dead in a provisional material form, as does the spirit medium whose body is momentarily possessed, is an act of "representation and interpretation of past events," she writes.[24] Thompson's influential reading of possession finds an echo in Apichatpong's conception of filmmaking as an endeavor to materialize the past in images and sounds. "I made films without knowing how true they really were," he says, "like waking the dead and . . . making them walk once more."[25] In his hands cinema becomes, as well as a technological medium, an animistic medium of possession and a vessel for reincarnating the departed. For Apichatpong, sleep

is one more "indigenous way of making history: history in the broadest sense, as a social locus for communal memory and forgetting."[26] To peer at the obscure edges of sleep is therefore to confront the far reaches of time—where ghosts rise up from the depths to grasp at the living, where remembrance touches the outermost bounds of existence, and where individual consciousness merges into the ground of a collective experience. Encountering Apichatpong's work, one might wonder: "if the part of our mind which travels back ('regressively back transformed') is unconscious to us, how can we possibly be sure, when we sleep, where it might take us, just how far back in fact we go?"[27]

4

Exiting and Entering Early Cinema

The foregoing question was posed by the critic Jacqueline Rose in her 2000 paper "On Not Being Able to Sleep." Rose's reflections resonate with Apichatpong's approach in more ways than one. With its focus on the visions experienced in sleep, *Cemetery of Splendor* at once summons and announces a break from long-standing notions of an essential affinity between film and dreams. Some of the most inventive moments of cinema history—from German Expressionism to Surrealism to the postwar avant-garde—have been animated by explorations of the medium's oneiric potential. In discourses about cinema, too, "the dream is one of the most persistent metaphors in both classical and modern film theory," Laura Rascaroli observes.[1] Yet this metaphor tends to reduce sleep to the status of an obscured foundation for, or transparent window into, oneiric activity, commanding little interest on its own. The bodily state of slumber is overshadowed by the enthralling inner landscapes to be discovered on the far shores of conscious reality. Rather than a destination in itself, sleep figures only marginally, as a layover to pass through quickly in the transition from one realm to the other. It rarely receives sustained consideration in its own right. In contrast to this tendency, Apichatpong calls attention to the activity of slumber by placing it front and center. To stop short at the gateway into dreams and stay with the image of somnolent bodies is to tarry in a state usually passed through quickly. In his work, sleep becomes at once striking in its newfound visibility and uncanny in its familiarity.

This altered perspective implicitly reformulates the relationship between sleeping and dreaming, instead of automatically subsuming the one to the other. A similar objective forms the core of Rose's theoretical reflections. "On Not Being Able to Sleep" conducts a close reading and reframing of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the groundbreaking study by Sigmund Freud that, more than any other single text, lays the foundation for modern understandings of the dream. Freud composes a grand synthesis of previous explanations of dreaming in order to supersede them with his own scientific theory of the dream as "a psychical structure which has a

meaning," a theory that would leave its imprint across many disciplinary domains.[2] At the very outset of his study, Freud sets sleep to the side as "essentially a problem of physiology." As such, it bears no relevance to his account of the dream as a fabrication of the unconscious mind and hence a problem of psychoanalysis, warranting no further scrutiny.[3] The readiness with which the fascination with dreams displaces the question of sleep is replicated in this framing gesture, and for good reason. While both of these processes designate an experiential domain beyond volitional control, sleep, unlike dreaming, leaves few traces in memory and yields no intriguing testimony to the mysteries of interior life. This displacement is therefore a strategic operation, as Roland Barthes argues, serving to "recuperate" sleep's nonproductivity, to rescue it from "the disgrace of the 'good for nothing,'" and to absorb it into a regime of use value. With the concept of "dream-work," he writes, "psychoanalysis instituted the idea of the *producing* dream, material for analysis."[4]

The elision of sleep within dreams finds expression in a frequently cited passage from *The Interpretation of Dreams:* "All dreams are in a sense dreams of convenience: they serve the purpose of prolonging sleep instead of waking up. *Dreams are the* GUARDIANS *of sleep and not its disturbers*."[5] But as Rose points out, sleep is, in fact, "the one thing that will not let [Freud] rest."[6] Indeed, throughout the book, Freud keeps returning to the problem of sleep—revisiting his earlier assertion that dreams are the guardians of sleep in order to restate it, reinterrogate it, and finally, revoke it altogether. Sleep moves decisively to the center of his considerations in the book's seventh and final chapter. Here Freud takes a step back from detailing the signifying processes of dreaming in order to assume what he calls a "metapsychological" perspective. He considers the psychical apparatus in its totality as a composite system, made up of separate mental agencies, each with its own functions and purposes. With this change of vantage comes a corresponding change in tone toward increasing doubt and uncertainty, as Freud considers how the differential functioning of the psyche complicates his previous formulation of the relationship between sleeping and dreaming. Does the dreamer in fact sleep? Or are dreams rather the residues of mental activity, evidence of the failure of sleep to be fully established? Over the course of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud comes around to the latter view and finally concludes that the dream, in fact, proves that some part of the mind "does not obey the wish to sleep."[7] While earlier on he can confidently posit that "every successful dream is a fulfillment" of the ego's wish for sleep, by the final chapter it becomes undeniable that the dream also *betrays* this "universal, invariably present, and unchanging wish to sleep."[8] As a process that releases the unconscious wishes normally censored in waking thought, dreaming always has the potential to "threaten to shake the subject out of his sleep."[9] He writes, "it must therefore be admitted that every dream has an arousing effect," oftentimes assuming the role of "a *disturber* of sleep."[10]

The final chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams* has been described by some as one of "the most difficult and abstract of Freud's writings."[11] The author himself

intimates as much when he pauses to reflect on the point he has reached in his investigation. Freud writes, "Until now, if I am not much mistaken, all the paths we have trodden have led us into the light, to enlightenment and full understanding; from the moment we propose to go more deeply into the psyche's inner processes of dreaming, all our ways lead into the dark."[12] It is here, Rose keenly observes, that Freud finds himself "forced back inside the very realm or space which he was attempting to master for the future of science—the space which the psychoanalyst, unlike the sleeper, could talk about."[13] Sleep returns both to disturb the theory of the dream as a psychic process and to trouble the scientific enterprise with an awareness of its own limits, signaling the critical difference between "a psychoanalysis which sees its task as waking the soul into reason, and a psychoanalysis which does not know, cannot be sure, whether it itself is awake."[14] From within this darkness, Rose proposes an alternative to the epistemological project of mastering the unconscious. Sleep, she writes, "is one of the ways we pay tribute to the unconscious, to the idea of something vital and uncontrollable in our minds. If sleep cannot be willed, crucially we never know what will happen—or where exactly we are going—when we go to sleep."[15] And by extension, neither can we be sure of the direction in which the path of awakening lies. The obscurity of sleep cannot be dispelled by the work of dreams and what they disclose of an individual psyche. Rather, it preserves within itself all that remains unknown, unremembered, or unarticulated in psychic life.

Rose wrests the problem of sleep from within the pages of the book of dreams. In so doing, she extends an invitation to the reader to follow the ways that lead into the dark by retracing Freud's footsteps and then looking to other guides beyond the point past which he will go no further.[16] To follow their lead is to recognize the fissures between sleeping and dreaming, disturbing their assumed complementarity. Indeed, Freud is not alone in his skepticism toward the stability of the pact between sleep and dreams. He finds company with thinkers like Barthes, for whom "the utopia of sleep is dreamless"; Maurice Blanchot, who views dreaming as a form of insomnia, "a refusal to sleep within sleep"; and neurophysiologist Michel Jouvet, who defines dreaming as a third state of the brain that is distinct from both sleeping and waking, a state he calls *paradoxical sleep*.[17] These theoretical reframings, like Apichatpong's films, clear a space for thinking about sleep on its own terms, a problem for art and philosophy as much as for psychoanalysis.

An approach to the relationship between sleeping and dreaming as an open question, rather than a settled pact, provides the basis for the discussion that follows. The remainder of this chapter revisits the idea of an affinity between cinema and dreams, tracing this idea to the beginnings of motion pictures. I consider several examples that fall within the conventional definition of the dream scene, representing the internal perceptions of figures and characters who are asleep. Not only do these examples speak to an insight shared by early filmmakers into the oneiric properties of the filmic image, its operation according to another order and

logic; they also map the development of a set of strategies for dynamizing space and time, starting with and moving outward from a primary scenario of sleep that is repeated from film to film. I pay close attention to the rites of slumber that frame the activity of dreaming, the positioning of the sleeper in relation to the landscapes spun from their dreams, and the spatiotemporal shifts precipitated by the act of closing one's eyes. In compiling these works from early cinema, along with their corresponding illustrative film stills, I aim for an effect like that of Apichatpong's films, generating a new focus on sleep that magnifies its visibility, while also highlighting its familiarity as an originary scene rooted in the earliest years of filmmaking. The bodies of sleepers germinate throughout the history of cinema, so many markers of the elsewheres and beyonds that the medium claims as its own. As brief as their appearances may be, the very regularity of these appearances speaks to their significance as corporeal signs of passage. The chapter concludes with a consideration of how the functions of the sleeper shift in later decades.

The parallels between the projection of moving photographs and the mental operations of sleeping and dreaming were not lost on the first practitioners of motion pictures. Works such as *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* (Edwin S. Porter, 1906) make these parallels explicit. This early film visualizes the dreams of a central figure who, after overindulging in food and drink, stumbles home and collapses into bed. Sleep does not come easy for this gourmand, as implied by the tiny fairies who emerge from a tureen and jab at his head with pitchforks, but eventually arrives. His bed shakes with a violent energy, crashes through the bedroom's windows, and takes off into the night sky. The sleeper sits up to find himself flying across the tops of buildings. The film comes to an end along with the dream, indicated by the abrupt return to terrestrial reality as the airborne bed comes crashing back down into the bedroom. By means of double exposures and tricks of editing, *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* summons a fantastical scene of illusions. On the one hand, the dream operates as a dramatic conceit that explains impossible actions. On the other hand, it is also reflexively identified with film's capacities to bend the laws of gravity and space. In *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend*, the sleeper's journey serves as a vehicle for experimenting with the unique powers of cinematic technology, arousing visual interest not in what it tells us, but in the tricks it plays on space and time.

The imagery of sleep in early cinema mirrors that of other contemporary visual media—particularly comics, as Scott Bukatman's work has shown. *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* illustrates the link between the two media, as a film based on the popular American newspaper cartoon by Winsor McCay. With each installment, the cartoon depicted a new character's outlandish dreams. In the final panel, the sleeper would awaken with a start, usually in bed like the drunken man in the film. (The cartoon's running joke—that it has the irresistible appeal of cheese on toast to thank for its existence—can perhaps be attributed to popular beliefs about the digestive roots of oneiric activity.) Even so, argues Bukatman, the dreamers presented in it are in fact "*not* real dreamers; they are rather functions of McCay's

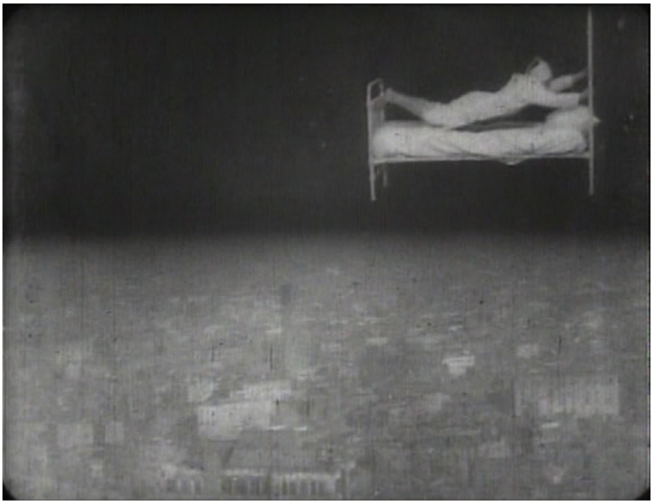


FIGURE 19. *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* (Edwin S. Porter, 1906).

(and his readers') playful imaginations."[18] A similar conceit appears in another comic serial by McCay, *Little Nemo in Slumberland*. The "motionless voyages" taken each night by the little boy Nemo, like those of the rarebit fiends, typically end back in his bed as he emerges from his slumber.[19] These nocturnal rituals of flight and return constitute a bridge between the serial format of comics, the reading practices cultivated by print periodicals, and the newly emerging habit of moviegoing. Across these spheres of popular print and visual culture, the bedroom comes to be visualized as a metamorphic setting, a space rendered dynamic by the act of reverie, and "a fleeting refuge from the stolidity of the real."[20]

Figures like Little Nemo appeared elsewhere in early twentieth-century American pictorial culture. Alexander Nemerov has described the trope of "the boy in bed" found in this period, such as in the work of Brandywine School artists like Jesse Willcox Smith. Smith's illustration *The Land of Counterpane* (1905) shows a boy tucked under the covers, his head slumping on his pillow and eyes looking out from heavily drooping lids; across the expanse of his bedsheets a phalanx of tiny soldiers marches. In this illustration, the child is not evidently dreaming, but seems to resist the onset of sleep so as to stay a little longer with the solitude and darkness that nourish reverie. Likewise, in the other examples referenced by Nemerov—all boys with one exception, in middle-class homes that locate the bed in a solitary chamber—the children who imagine as they lie in bed are neither clearly sleeping nor clearly dreaming. What is most striking in these pictures is the association forged between the bedroom and the exercise of the mind's powers to call forth images, such that "the scene of imagination and the topic of imagination fuse into one locale."[21] The mise-en-scène of the bedroom becomes a space of fusion and doubling, and its props—beds, darkness, and pajama-clad figures—become so

many clues that the image cannot be understood to represent a single time-space continuum. In these illustrations, sleep announces its presence not as a performed action so much as a motif of discontinuous reality. Pictures like these circulated in a period when the faculty of imagining—of mentally summoning images—was caught between the old medium of the book and the new medium of film. The latter, Nemerov argues, threatened to appropriate "the book's traditional role as the provider of powerful hallucinations of absent entities."[22] But in so doing, cinema also reanimated the sleepy tropes of books and their illustrations, affirming and identifying with their power to carry the viewer away.

An identification of cinematic technologies with unconscious flights is also found in the work of the French filmmaker and special effects pioneer George Méliès. Among his large corpus of films are several that transpire in the interval of sleep and within the framework of a dream—describing delightful fantasies of enchantment or, conversely, the anxious nightmares of men of science, tormented by their inventions and objects of study. For instance, *A Grandmother's Story* (1908) begins with another boy in bed: after listening to his grandmother's bedtime story, a child goes to sleep. On the blank expanse of wall above his bed, an angel fades into view and awakens the child. The two figures fade out together, and then a dissolve transports us to a land of animated toys and miniature gardens, a fairyland that is perhaps inspired by the grandmother's tale. The boy lies down to rest in the garden, fanned by the wings of fairies, and another dissolve takes him back to his bedroom. The placement of his body on the screen when he falls asleep in the garden is identical to that of the bedroom, so that the effect of the dissolve is a metamorphosis of the setting that surrounds his fixed position in space. When he sits up in bed and rubs his eyes in confusion, the film comes to an end. In another film by Méliès, *The Inventor Crazybrains and His Wonderful Airship* (1905), a single-shot set-up projects oneiric space directly upon the setting of a study in which the inventor nods off after having drawn up a model of a dirigible. The walls of the study fall away, and mischievous creatures dance around and torment the inventor. His drawing turns into an animated object that floats in the sky, gives birth to floating sylphs, and explodes in flames. Throughout these episodes, the inventor himself lies asleep on the floor, tossing violently before he finally wakes with a start. Like the preceding examples, this film also terminates with the conclusion of the dream.

In contrast to *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend*, which fully immerses the fiend within his own nightmare as an unwitting participant and incredulous witness, these two Méliès films maintain markers of division between the virtual space of the dream and the physical space occupied by the sleeper. The child of *A Grandmother's Story* who steps into his dreamland is dressed differently from the boy in his nightclothes, signaling to viewers that they witness a dream version of this character. The snoozing inventor of *The Inventor Crazybrains* remains a constant presence in the foreground of the image throughout his nightmare. Here the inert body of



FIGURE 20. *A Grandmother's Story* (George Méliès, 1908).

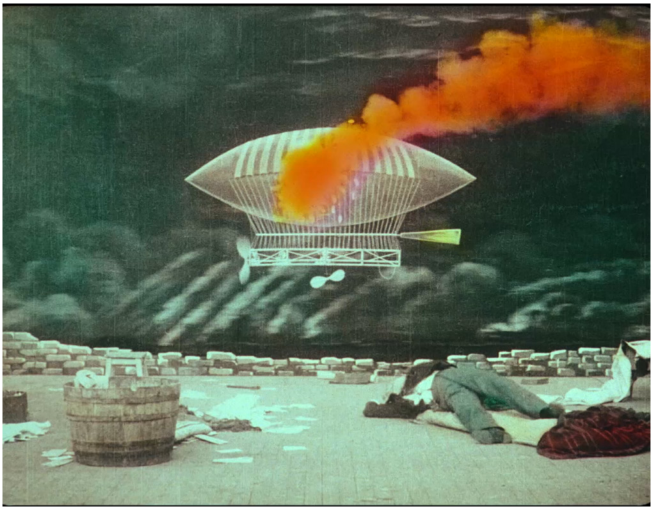


FIGURE 21. *The Inventor Crazybrains and His Wonderful Airship* (George Méliès, 1905).

the sleeper anchors the shift into transformative landscapes, exerting its gravitational pull against nocturnal flights and coding the field of the shot as a projection of the character's internal oneiric visions. The setting of the dream and the contents of the dream merge upon a single plane—not in the inventor's own perception, but for the film viewer only—generating a layered image that is simultaneously objective and subjective. More evocative of *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* is Méliès's *Hallucinations of Baron Munchausen* (1911), a film that likewise sets up the

action with a scenario of drunken feasting. The baron retires to a bed positioned under an enormous gilt mirror that assumes manifold functions as the film progresses: a screen upon which the baron's dreams are projected, a barrier that he cannot cross despite his efforts, and then a portal through which fiendish figures invade the bedroom and torment him. When the mirror disappears from view, the separation between virtual and physical space likewise dissolves, such that the baron finds himself trapped inside his nightmare. He seems to rouse himself and return to the original setting of the bedroom, but this proves to be a false awakening, yet another oneiric illusion. Pieces from the mise-en-scène, such as mirror and bed, become props in a drama of discontinuous, destabilized reality—a drama wherein the sleeper encounters an antagonist in the form of his dream and struggles to extricate himself from the intricate nets in which it ensnares him. Only after violently ejecting himself from the bedroom altogether does the baron finally succeed in exiting the world of the dream.

Similar scenes of lying down to sleep and false awakenings recur throughout the films of Méliès. A striking number of them refer to dreams and nightmares in their titles: *The Nightmare* (1896); *The Astronomer's Dream* (1898); *The Christmas Dream* (1900); *The Rajah's Dream* (1900); *The Ballet-Master's Dream* (1903); *The Clockmaker's Dream* (1904); *Tunneling the English Channel (or the Franco-Anglo Nightmare)* (1907); and *The Dream of an Opium Fiend* (1908). Moreover, the presentation of sleep as prompt to action can be found even in films that do not take dreams as their main premise, such as *The Life of an American Fireman* (1903). This early example of filmic narration depicts the rescue of a woman and child from a burning house by a group of firefighters. The film begins with an enigmatic overture to the firemen's call to action that also places its sequence of events in a nocturnal time frame. The chief fireman dozes and dreams at his desk. The vision that comes to him in his sleep is projected alongside him in an iris-view superimposition, of a mother tucking in her child for the night; as she extinguishes the bedside light, the image fades to black. But notwithstanding the peaceful mood of this domestic vignette, something in the dream alarms and rouses him. He gets up and exits the frame; the next shot shows a hand in close-up as it sounds a fire alarm. The firemen leap from their beds in reaction to the sound, and the endangered victims to whom they subsequently race to rescue are likewise awakened from their sleep. The fire—the central narrative event that provokes and links together the series of actions—interrupts the sleep of all of these characters, effectively undoing the initial gesture of preparing for nighttime rest shown in the fireman's dream.

The gestures of sleeping and awakening constitute a pattern of repetitions and reversals in a film often noted by early cinema historians for its curiously nonlinear, recursive, and overlapping arrangement of shots. While *The Life of an American Fireman* has yielded important insights into early cinema's modes of representation and (for present-day viewers) unfamiliar sequential logics, the scene with which the film begins has remained somewhat of a puzzle for commentators



FIGURE 22. *The Hallucinations of Baron Munchausen* (George Méliès, 1911).

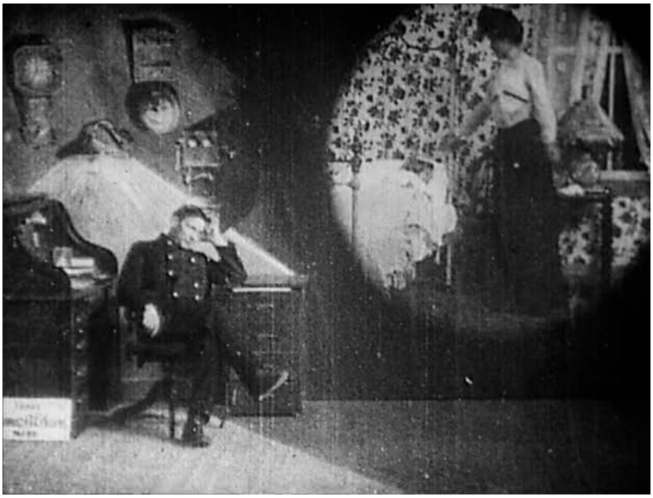


FIGURE 23. *The Life of an American Fireman* (Edwin S. Porter, 1903).

because of its unclear causal connection to what follows. It has been interpreted in various ways—as the fireman's dream of his own wife and child, or a premonition of danger referring to the woman and child who are saved later in the film.[23] The ambiguity of this composite image generates a narrative puzzle for the viewer; are we witnessing something remembered or something taking place? In its uncertain relation to what follows, it stands apart as an unexplained vision and a cryptic mise en abîme of a dream of sleep.[24]

In this early period, the sleeper emerges as a key recurring figure, and the bed a central topos, for cinema. Together they designate a gateway into a projected space of fictions, fantasies, and other places. Sleep marks the presence of a threshold to be crossed, and this crossing assumes an overdetermined significance as a ritual of departure and return, of beginnings and endings. The operationalization of sleep in this manner involves a set of cues wherein characters settle into bed and close their eyes, indicating an incipient pause in activity and disconnection from the surrounding environment.[25] This withdrawal, moreover, functions as the preparation for and prelude to the passage to another reality that is created by the film. The action pauses in order to resume in another realm. Thus, the scene of sleep functions in a transitive capacity, in the manner of a revolving door—a removal from one space that is also an emergence elsewhere, a retreat that is simultaneously a reentry, a stillness that sets another series of events into motion. In their repetitions and restaging of this scene, early filmmakers anticipate an insight made by Anne Carson, poet of sleep and one of its most astute commentators, who defines it as an exit that is also an entrance.[26] The sleepers of early cinema hover on the cusp of physical and virtual realities, embodying at once the point of departure to an alternate imaginary realm and the point of return to earth. This paradoxical status mirrors the gestures of a medium that holds forth the promise of transport while simultaneously fixing its viewers in place. Scenes like these attest to the aspirations of a young medium to the "motionless voyage" of sleep.[27]

The sleeper in this context embodies a role more than a character, defined by representational function rather than psychological substance. Consequently, their dreams serve primarily as a technique for motivating shifts in perspective and engendering discontinuities in the time-space continuum. The development of cinema's narrational codes in ensuing decades, however, brings about a change in filmmakers' approaches to sleeping and dreaming. As Charles Keil has argued, these actions are gradually dissociated from the amusement of "disparity between the dream world and the waking one."[28] Beginning in the period of narrative integration, as movies adopt more elaborate structures of storytelling, the dream emerges as a key tool for "explaining a character's state of mind and subsequent actions."[29] Reoriented toward the objectives of plot exposition, it increasingly comes to signify as an interior vision conveying psychological content. The significance of the dreams that appear in the American transitional-era films analyzed by Keil resides less in their difference from waking reality than in their power to elucidate that reality, by providing an avenue into a psychological realm of wishes, motives, and desires.[30] In the era of narrative cinema, the dream sequence—self-contained, stylistically distinct, and set apart from diegetic reality—is channelized by the requirements of complex characterization. Thus, the content of the dream as a message about interiority (or what it means) comes to eclipse the action of sleep and the perspectival shift that it performs (what it does).

Keil's analysis demonstrates how the relationship between sleeping and dreaming in the cinema changes through time. The changing historical patterns to which

he refers can also be mapped as competing approaches and divergent effects that endure well beyond the transitional era. The appeal of sleep and dreams as a portal into an alternate world, undercutting "the stolidity of the real," does not vanish entirely but persists in later decades as an alternative to the dominant trajectory he identifies. Returning to the case of *Inception*, for instance, we find evidence of this persistence. The criticism frequently levied against the film—that it drains its dreamscapes of any charge of the unconscious or irrational—speaks precisely to its predominantly topographical approach to dreaming as a mechanism for splintering and branching off lateral realities. In this regard, the film shares more in common with early cinema than with antecedents from later decades—returning to the treatment of the scene of sleep as a revolving door, both exit and entrance, to spin it at a more disorienting speed.

Turning to a more classical example in this vein, in *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939), we see again a transition from a prosaic reality to a fantastical imagined world that is signaled by the action of lying in bed and closing one's eyes. Dorothy's transport from her drab Kansas hometown to the Technicolor land of Oz is presented as a journey suddenly precipitated by a blackout. Caught in a tornado, Dorothy is struck on the head by the window in her bedroom as it flies open from the force of the gale outside. She falls down on her bed, and the film cuts to a tight close-up of Dorothy's face in profile as she lies there inert and unconscious. This image begins to rock from side to side, as if buffeted by currents of wind. The feeling of dynamic motion is enhanced by the superimposition of a moving shot of the sky over the close-up, so that clouds seem to stream rapidly across Dorothy's visage. More layers thicken this welter of movement, as the facial close-up blurs and doubles while continuing its rocking rhythm. Just as the shot begins to slip entirely from legibility, a tiny house flies into the frame and spins upward in spiraling circles.

The unstable flux of the image reminds the viewer of the whirlwind raging outside as the shot unfolds, but it remains unclear if this image is to be read as an interior or exterior space. Is Dorothy caught inside the eye of the tornado, or are we the viewers caught inside her head? The profile of Dorothy's face fades out completely, leaving behind the image of roiling clouds in an open sky. The camera begins to track backward, revealing the shot to be the view from the bedroom window; it continues to track until the entire bedroom enters into view, with Dorothy on her bed positioned in the lower left corner. She awakens with a start, looks out the window at the effects of the storm, and realizes that her house is floating in the vortex of the tornado. Finally the winds subside, and the house touches back down; opening the door and stepping outside, she finds herself in the Land of Oz. The movement that takes Dorothy from the one place to the other draws on a set of familiar conventions from early cinema: the journey taken during sleep, visualized as a precipitous flight through the sky on a bed much like that of the central figure of *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend;* the bedroom as the projection site for an illusory world that subsequently engulfs waking reality; and the awakening of the sleeper to a different order of reality.



FIGURE 24. *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939).



FIGURE 25. *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939).



FIGURE 26. *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939).

Salman Rushdie equates the moment when Dorothy collapses into bed with the crossing of a threshold. Now, he writes, "we have passed through the film's most important gateway."[31] Despite the many visual cues that couch her subsequent adventures in Oz within the dramatic conceit of "it was all a dream," it is not quite accurate to describe this passage in terms of a transition from the objective realm of the Kansas farm to the subjective realm of Dorothy's dream. The cause of her loss of consciousness, after all, is a hard blow to the head; the faint that ensues, unlike REM sleep, ought not to give rise to dream visions. This lapse in verisimilitude, nonetheless, introduces additional nuance to the representation of sleep. Beyond participating in a tradition of visualizing the scene of sleep as a place for flights of reverie and the conjuring of elsewheres, *The Wizard of Oz* also brings to light another layer of associations that hover around the figure of the girl in bed. If the iconography of boys in bed is informed by Romanticist notions of childhood as "the special preserve of innocence and imagination," as Kathleen Pyne has pointed out, that of the girl in bed reflects a more ambivalent legacy.[32] For the girl, the innocent peace of slumber is shadowed by the disturbing suggestion of violent injury, as illustrated in the ready slippage between sleep and blackout. Later in the film, Dorothy experiences yet another sleep that is not strictly a sleep. The Wicked Witch of the West, attempting to thwart Dorothy's progress toward the Emerald City, casts a spell on a field of poppies that fills them with a poisonous scent. "Poppies will put them to sleep . . . sleep . . . now they'll sleep," she croons. Evoking the fairy tale of Snow White, who also sleeps under the spell of an evil sorceress, the episode was perhaps devised in response to Walt Disney's popular adaptation of this tale as an animated film two years prior to *The Wizard of Oz*. With this allusion, the film situates its protagonist's sleep on an even broader continuum that encompasses the states of entrancement, intoxication, and magical suspension. A shot of Dorothy passed out among the poppies echoes the image of the insentient Snow White surrounded by flowers as she lies in her glass coffin and awaits the kiss that will break the spell.

In the mythologies of enchanted princesses (like Snow White, but also Little Briar Rose, who also succumbs to a death-like slumber), sleep tells a tale about female sexuality, one replete with heavy-handed metaphors—flowers, kisses, awakening. *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), the landmark film of the American avant-garde by Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid, incorporates these same metaphors in the drama it spins from a woman's sleep. The film begins with a walking woman (played by Deren) who stops to pick up a large flower that has been left on the sidewalk. Continuing her walk, she arrives at her house just as a shadowed figure disappears around the bend of the street. After letting herself in with her key, she conducts a quick inspection of the cottage's rooms—the kitchen, where a knife has been left on the table, and the upstairs bedroom, where a phonograph is still playing—and then settles into an armchair in the living room for a nap. She places the flower, a poppy, such that it nestles in her crotch, and her



FIGURE 27. *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939).

hand drifts across her body in a sensual caress. The shots that follow cut between an extreme close-up framing her left eye and her point of view through the living room window onto the sidewalk: her eyelid flutters closed, the image darkens, and somnolence descends. A robed figure who recalls the disappearing pedestrian from earlier enters the window view, just as the camera rushes backward into a tube, in an involuting movement suggestive of a retreat into the woman's dreaming mind. Then another cut takes us straight into the dream, onto the sidewalk outside the house with the robed figure, who again disappears around the bend just as the woman again arrives as the house. From this point on, the basic series of actions performed by the woman before her nap is repeated, with variations, by her dream-double. Not only does the dream replay reality on a loop, it also folds back over itself in a spiraling logic. The double looks out the window and spies yet another version of herself, and so on. Another dream unfolds from within the dream, and again, until Deren's character has three sets of doubles. When they conspire to murder the sleeping woman, who is also present in the oneiric scene, it becomes manifestly clear that awakening from this dream will be no straightforward matter. In this destabilized zone, an exit might prove to be deceptive.

The intricacy of *Meshes of the Afternoon*'s formal structure is contradicted by the simplicity of its semantic elements, prosaic in their substance and fable-like in their presentation. Pared down and repeated, these elements assume an overdetermined status. Connotative meanings stand out in even starker relief, producing a certain



FIGURE 28. *Meshes of the Afternoon* (Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid, 1943).

quality of obviousness—of "cumbersome heavy symbolism," in the words of John David Rhodes—that weighs upon the film and strains its reception.[33] While Deren adamantly rejected symbolic readings of her films, such readings have proven difficult to resist and nearly impossible to obviate given the heaviness of the metaphors, such as the poppy with its all too ready-to-hand associations.[34] The sense that this vignette encodes some deeper psychosexual drama, involving erotic and thanatotic urges, is reinforced with the introduction of a second character.[35] A man—played by Hammid, Deren's collaborator and husband at the time—seems to interrupt the oneiric drama. At the moment when the murderous double plunges the knife at the original Maya, her eyes open with a start. A reverse shot shows the man's face in close-up, pulling back from an embrace that has evidently roused her. Just as his kiss awakens the woman, so the man's entrance banishes the errant atmosphere of the dream and brings the restoration of a normal, objective perspective. We seem to have arrived at the expected ending, with the return to the waking world and the kiss that both seals the compact of marriage and signals resolution. But as the couple begins to make love, the perspective fractures yet again and the interrupted gesture of violence is resumed. The falseness of this awakening is revealed in what Rhodes calls a "sudden explosion into full-scale gender warfare."[36] This is followed by a second ending that calls into further question the distinction between dream and reality: the man enters the house to find the woman in the armchair, dead, covered in broken glass and seaweed. At the same time that *Meshes of the Afternoon* returns to the scene of sleep to mine its formal possibilities, it recasts this scene in a gendered framework, calling deliberate attention to the intimations of menace and violence that cluster around the figure of the sleeping woman. Later in this book, I further consider these intimations as they extend into portrayals of drowsy intimacy.

Even while referring to *Meshes of the Afternoon* as an effort to reproduce the forms of subjective experience by cinematic means, Deren resisted the attribution of psychological significance to its thematic contents. Its radical dislocations of time and space must not be recontained or domesticated within a framework of marital psychodrama. To approach *Meshes* in this way would be to apply the methods of dream interpretation, to affect to interpret the dream(s) within the film. For her part, however, Deren singled out for contempt those critics of a Freudian bent. This resistance to an excessive focus on what the dream means simultaneously registers an insistence on what the act of sleep does, its capacity to generate multiple discontinuous realities while holding them together in one place. The urgency invested by Deren in the artistic project of exploring these capacities comes across in her note on the famous sequence in the film that cuts together a series of disparate spaces (beach, field, sidewalk) in the strides of the murderous double toward her victim.

> It was like a crack letting the light of another world gleam through. I kept saying to myself, "The walls of this room are solid except right there. That leads to something. There's a door there leading to something. I've got to get it open because there I can go through to someplace instead of leaving here by the same way that I came in."[37]

Deren's comments on this scene provide an apt description of the film's scenario as a whole. From the moment the woman nods off, reality splinters and a threshold materializes. *Meshes of the Afternoon* revitalizes the disruptive potential that early filmmakers discovered in sleep, attesting to the historical dialogue between avant-garde cinema and early cinema. In her adamant refusal of readings that mine the film's oneiric events for psychological meaning, Deren also rejected the kind of dream interpretation that mainstream narrative films invited their audiences to perform. A paradigmatic example of the latter can be found in the 1945 thriller *Spellbound* (directed by Alfred Hitchcock), containing a surreal dream sequence famously created by Salvador Dalí that encrypts the hidden origin of the puzzling events of the story. At the film's therapeutically framed conclusion, the dream sequence is decoded, the mystery unlocked, and the dreamer freed from the grip of his repressed memories. The dream becomes object-like, a film within the film, as it is recounted, replayed, and intently reanalyzed, becoming independent of the sleep from which it emerges.

Conversely, the shifting functions of these activities can be detected in portrayals of dreamless sleep wherein the sleeper does not take off in transformational flights, remaining stuck and flattened in place. Thus, Elena Gorfinkel locates somnolence within postwar art cinema's archive of bodies arrested in states of weariness, waiting, and idleness. Like these bodies, the sleeper is a figure trapped in the meshes of the body's internal limits along with external socio-historico-economic circumstances that exhaust its capacities. In Apichatpong, to

whom the following chapters return, we find a filmmaker who fluidly navigates between the diverging itineraries of sleeping in the cinema. His work confronts the conditions that give rise to sleep as one more instantiation of the tired body, expressing its "drift, dispossession, and 'enduration,'" to cite Gorfinkel.[38] At the same time, for Apichatpong, sleep is invested with the possibility of a break from these conditions, as a place from which other exits and entrances beckon to undreamed elsewheres.

5

Somnolent Journeys

The cryptic prelude of *The Life of American Fireman*, in which the chief firefighter has a dream of sleep, might call to mind another well-known overture from a work of modern literature that similarly begins with closed eyes. Marcel Proust inaugurates *In Search of Lost Time* with the sleepy thoughts of the narrator Marcel. The book's very first sentence—"For a long time, I went to bed early"—activates a pendulum of consciousness that moves back and forth between snatches of slumber and glimmerings of wakefulness, generating a pulse that sustains the book's opening chapter.[1]

> Sometimes, my candle scarcely out, my eyes would close so quickly that I did not have time to say to myself: "I'm falling asleep." And, half an hour later, the thought that it was time to try to sleep would wake me. (7)
>
> I would go back to sleep, and sometimes afterwards woke only briefly for a moment . . . . I would completely surround my head with my pillow before returning to the world of dreams . . . . I woke up. (8)
>
> My stiffened side, trying to guess its orientation, would imagine, for instance, that it lay facing the wall in a big canopied bed and immediately I would say to myself, "Why, I went to sleep in the end even though Mama didn't come to say good night to me," I was in the country at the house of my grandfather . . . . (10)
>
> Then the memory of a new position would be reborn; the wall would slip away in another direction: I was in my room in Mme de Saint-Loup's, in the country; good Lord! It's ten o'clock or even later, they will have finished dinner! I must have overslept in the nap I take every evening when I come back from my walk with Mme de Saint-Loup. (10)

The reader's first acquaintance is with a drowsy, disoriented narrator who lies alone and blinking in the dark as he recollects and describes a series of scenes from the past that echo the present nocturnal situation. Marcel shakes off his sleep, wonders what time it is, and resumes his intermittent slumber. And with every swing of the pendulum of his hazy consciousness, the question of temporal

positioning becomes increasingly vexed. Each brief awakening described by Marcel triggers another succession of memories—recollections of past awakenings, of oneiric interludes dreamed in different rooms that he momentarily confuses with the one he presently occupies, and of insomniac episodes that lead to further confusion between daybreak and dead night. Within the hazy penumbra of sleep, minutes expand and contract. The narrator's immediate physical surroundings dissolve into motion and rearrange themselves. The ever-turning "kaleidoscope of the darkness" hurtles Marcel through a succession of bedrooms in which he has slept before, such that he is no longer sure of where or when he is.[2]

In this overture, the effect of sleep is strikingly similar to the motionless voyages of cinema, generating what is in essence a cinematic conjunction of movement in stasis.[3] From a fixed, unmoving position, Marcel paradoxically experiences a vertiginous journey, "travelling at top speed through time and space." Despite his feeling of physical paralysis—"my body, too benumbed to move"—he is swept up in a vortex of dynamic motion, much like Dorothy caught in the eye of the tornado: "everything revolved around me in the darkness, things, countries, years."[4] A whirlwind emanates from Marcel's inner state of sleepy disorientation to surround him in his bed, along with the reader, now also deprived of gravity and locational coordinates, and made unsure of where and when the story begins. After numerous entrances and exits—Balbec, Paris, Doncières, Venice—this journey back in time comes to a halt and deposits the reader on solid ground. The memories aroused by slumber and sustained in nocturnal reveries eventually clarify into the episodes from Marcel's childhood in Combray that make up the first part of *Swann's Way*.[5]

In *In Search of Lost Time* Proust sets the stage with a dream of sleep—or more accurately, an uncontrolled, involuntary remembrance of past sleep. For as Roland Barthes rightly observes, "this sleep has nothing Freudian about it; it is not oneiric (there are few real dreams in Proust's work); rather, it is constituted by the depths of consciousness as *disorder*." In this fifty-page-long opening episode which, Barthes writes, "like a Tibetan *mandala*, collects together within its view the entire Proustian oeuvre," it is sleep itself that "has an inceptive value."[6] The scenario of fitful awakening, along with the uniquely disoriented form of perception that it breeds, is repeated and amplified throughout the book. Or, in some cases, it is the moments just before falling asleep that lead the narrator to waver unsteadily between distant places of the past and his current location. Sleep, Barthes observes, constitutes a founding principle of the entire work, "the *disorganization* of Time"; it "establishes another logic, a logic of Vacillation, of Decompartmentalization, and it is this new logic which Proust discovers in the episode of the madeleine."[7] In this novel, just as sleep can shatter "the immobility of the things around us"[8]—an immobility that is not their intrinsic property but rather imposed by perception—so the memories inadvertently released by sensory triggers can also make the things that surround us tremble and "flicker," can force "our whole person to believe itself surrounded

by [places that are actually far away]."[9] Thus, Proust compares these moments of vivid sensory recall with the "dizzying uncertainty akin to that which one sometimes experiences through some ineffable vision at the moment of falling asleep."[10] Sleep, as a condition that dislodges conscious control over the directionality of thought, appropriates for itself a measure of the power of involuntary memory to accomplish what intellect on its own cannot, to "make me find the old days again, the Lost Time."[11]

The first volume of *In Search of Lost Time* makes an appearance in *The Serenity of Madness*, a retrospective exhibition of Apichatpong's moving-image works. The exhibition concludes with an "archives room" displaying documents and texts from his personal collection. Along with original handwritten film scripts and storyboards, the display includes a table of books selected by the artist: volumes on Thailand's history and national politics that shed light on the political concerns of his projects, as well as fictional titles that indicate the web of literary inspirations underlying his work. These include the stories of Ray Bradbury, Roberto Bolaño's *By Night in Chile*, and a copy of *Swann's Way*. This suggestion of an affinity between Proust and Apichatpong is borne out by their common grasp of the inceptive value of sleep—as an action to describe and observe, a territory to explore, and a formal logic to elaborate. For the writer as much as for the artist-filmmaker, sleep activates interior movements that become the movement of the narrative. The effects of sleep in these opening pages are similar to those found in many of his films: the physical world is set atremble by unseen forces, the past surges forth to engulf the present, and partitions dissolve. Proust and Apichatpong dwell within the atmosphere of vacillating uncertainty that sleep brings in its wake, without going so far as to establish a binary contrast between dream worlds and waking worlds. For both of them, the visions produced in sleep include but also extend beyond dreaming. And both of them affirm, rather than dismiss as illusory, the reality of these visions and their power to resuscitate a past that both belongs to and exceeds the self.

Apichatpong, like Proust, conceives the act of sleeping as a kind of journeying, marked by a fluid mobility that supersedes ordinary constraints of space and time, and he invites the viewer to follow the movements that radiate from its apparent stillness. "I like people when they are sleeping—making a journey somewhere," he says, discussing the installation *Teem* (2007).[12] The installation consists of three silent videos projected onto different walls of the artist's then-partner Teem as he sleeps. Elsewhere the association between sleeping and journeying is forged in more literal terms. The short film *Luminous People* (*Khon Rueang Saeng*, 2007) centers on a reenactment of a Buddhist funereal ceremony, in which a group of people set out on a boat to scatter the ashes of a dead man into the Mekong River. As the boat makes its return journey after the ceremony has taken place, dusk falls and several of the participants drift off to sleep. The shots of the dozing passengers call to mind a tendency in the cinema to show characters nodding off while on the

road, upon the water, or in the air—en route if not in the bedroom (for instance, most of *Inception* transpires in the interval of a trans-Pacific flight). In the visual syntax and gestural economy of movies, sleep often marks an elision of the time of transport and telescopically condenses the distance between A and B. This coding reflects a perceived interchangeability between journeying and sleeping as instances of dead time, deferred action, and a state of in-betweenness.

Luminous People both evokes and deviates from the conventions of onscreen sleep. In this work, sleep implies not so much an expedient overcoming of distance and duration as getting lost within what lies in-between. The journey depicted here is a multilayered one: transpiring in a nebulous time between day and night, whose crepuscular light is enhanced by the graininess of Super 8 film; on a boat that traverses the distance between the dead and the living as it sends off the remains of the deceased father; and on a river that represents the border between two nations, Thailand and Laos. Just as the time of the ritual is indeterminate, so the memory of the dead man lingers, while the ceaseless flow of the river undercuts the solidity of geographical borders. A voice on the soundtrack sings a song about a dream vision: "Last night I dreamed that my father paid me a visit. Last night I dreamed that my father came. I was very happy . . . . Father." As Arnika Fuhrmann observes, this particular funeral subverts the ceremony's intended purport to "initiate the process of detachment from the dead"; instead, it "prompts continuing attachment to the deceased."[13] By integrating sleep and dream into the ritual—and rejection—of mourning, *Luminous People* plunges deeper into the zone of "otherworldly temporality" and spatial indeterminacy that is host to such residual desires.[14]

In the installation *Primitive*, the voyage of sleep is imagined through the tropes of science fiction, reflecting the artist's long interest in the genre. *Primitive* arose from a trip taken by Apichatpong to the rural northeast province of Isaan—one of Thailand's poorest regions, situated on its border with Laos, and distinct in language, religion, and regional identity from the dominant Siamese culture anchored in the country's south. (These differences are subtly but consistently signaled in Apichatpong's work.) Isaan was not brought under the direct rule of the Siamese monarchy until the late nineteenth century, and it continues to have the status of a disenfranchised and "disadvantaged regional minority."[15] Its history has been shaped by waves of political dissent and anti-state rebellions.[16] During the Cold War era, the Communist Party of Thailand established its strongest foothold in this region. Consequently, Isaan emerged as a locus of political conflict and a target of state counterinsurgent campaigns from the 1960s to the early 1980s (complicating the general view of Thailand as an island of stability amid the tumult of the Cold War, firmly in alliance with American interests). Apichatpong has a personal connection with Isaan, having lived there in his childhood, and it is also the homeland of his frequent collaborator, the actor Jenjira Pongpas.

During the making of *Primitive*, the artist found himself gravitating toward the village of Nabua, where the first instances of open warfare between state forces and



FIGURE 29. *Primitive* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2009). Courtesy of Kick the Machine.

communist-allied farmers broke out in the mid-1960s. The village subsequently became a "widow town," he notes, occupied by the military as it sought to crush the insurgency by means of execution, torture, and rape.[17] Working with a group of local youth living there (most of them migrant farm workers waiting for the harvest to begin), Apichatpong improvised performances with them and recorded their activities. The photographic and moving-image works resulting from their collaboration constitute the *Primitive* project, which he describes as "a portrait of the teenage male descendants of the communist farmers."[18] Among these collaborations was the construction of a "spaceship," which the teenagers designed and used for hanging out, drinking, and sleeping. A podlike hollow structure built from organic materials, cave-like when viewed from the inside, the spaceship fuses primitive forms with science fiction motifs. Some of the photography and video in *Primitive* show the young men dressed up in military fatigues and crashed out side by side on the floor inside the vessel. Awash in a saturated tint of bright red, the images suggest corpses left in the wake of battle as much as teenagers tired out by their playacting.

With this project Apichatpong overlays the notion of time travel upon that of extraterrestrial exploration, describing the spaceship as a time machine that transports its occupants to the future. The workings of this spaceship-time machine can be witnessed in his visual documentation of the teenagers lounging inside, fulfilling the vessel's dual function by sleeping and dreaming. "Our minds are like time machines waiting to depart for a long journey," posits Apichatpong, and "what we



FIGURE 30. *Primitive* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2009). Courtesy of Kick the Machine.

can achieve now is quite elementary and primitive, although we do it everyday: we sleep."[19] This identification of the ordinary act of sleep with the extraordinary feat of traveling in time has a Proustian ring to it, but also a broader popular resonance, calling to mind motifs from the science fiction genre. As well as sharing in the latter's galactic imagination, *Primitive* draws upon a particular coding of time travel in science fiction films, wherein sleep functions as a visual shorthand signifying a break from and projection beyond the present moment. The sleeping teenagers from Nabua have counterparts in American films of the late twentieth century like *Back to the Future* (Robert Zemeckis, 1985) and *Donnie Darko* (Richard Kelly, 2001). These two films have endings that find their teenage protagonists in bed, awakening to an alternative reality brought about by their interventions. The coding of sleep as a temporal restart function also finds precedents in earlier contributions to the genre. In *La Jetée* (Chris Marker, 1962), the story's leaps between an apocalyptic present, an unspoiled prewar past, and an unknown future are signaled by a fading out of and back into consciousness. The protagonist closes his eyes and blacks out in order to awaken to another time; in turn, the woman from his past whom he seeks in his time travels opens her own eyes to greet him. Science fiction turns to sleep as an exit that is also an entrance in an expanded temporal vista, providing an escape from dead ends and initiating a new timeline in answer to the desire to start over.

The question of futurity threads through *Primitive*, driving its exploration of sleep as "an active force of inertia," in Apichatpong's words.[20] The project addresses

Nabua's past and confronts a history of violence and death that remains unacknowledged and unmemorialized in official state discourse. But it does so not by staging an encounter between past and present according to a preconceived pedagogical imperative. Rather, its approach is to take a position alongside those who already live with this past and to make a space for their dreams. Apichatpong "does not seek to remedy or even remediate the political history of Nabua by transmitting knowledge of local memory into universal archives," as Una Chung writes about *Primitive*. "Nor will he shake the locals into horrified rememory of the traumas of the past" or demand that they confront the atrocities inflicted upon their ancestors. Instead, he adopts an approach that implicitly makes an argument for *living* history, "*as it finds us*, knowing that we are embedded in it in ways more complex and nonarbitrary than our conscious knowledge of time might lead us to think."[21] The weight of past events continues to press upon the current generation as they navigate ongoing conditions of economic devastation and political alienation. And so *Primitive* memorializes the isolation, boredom, and inertia felt by these teenagers who drink heavily, fantasize about escape, and sleep. The spaceship is a materialization of what Apichatpong describes as their "collective aspiration": "the act of closing one's eyes for refuge, or for transporting oneself to another reality to 'see' something different is to me a very relevant mechanism in our contemporary landscape. It's a kind of revolt."[22]

Apichatpong returned to Isaan for *Cemetery of Splendor*, shooting in his hometown of Khon Kaen. The film responds to recent developments in national politics that the director views as a continuation of the events behind the *Primitive* project. He writes, "The story of Nabua undeniably has echoes of the current political turmoil in Thailand. Institutions involved in those events of the past, along with new ones, are the key players in the ongoing chaos. Just as in the past, they manipulate the public psyche, instilling it with faith and fear."[23] In *Cemetery*, too, a scene of collective slumber serves as a figure for a vexed relation to history—one that weighs heavily upon the present but eludes straightforward reclamation, presenting a challenge to the exercise of discursive and political agency. Instead of teenage boys costumed in military fatigues to reenact episodes of armed struggle, like the participants in *Primitive*, the film centers on a group of actual soldiers, representatives of a military that constitutes one of the main bodies of state power in Thailand. The soldiers have been disarmed by an epidemic, an irresistible narcolepsy that also operates in the manner of a time machine, transporting the men's minds to a distant past while their bodies lie inert. The place where they sleep sits on the site of a former palace and cemetery of kings. Their illness has a supernatural cause, for "the spirits of the dead kings are drawing on the soldiers' energy to fight their battles," as one of the characters says. Thus, the film's mise-en-scène implicates the throne, another central state institution, and calls attention to the conjunction of military and monarchical power. Hovering below the surface of filmed reality is a monument to royal power (palace)

and a repository of the casualties wrought by the latter (cemetery), a shadow presence emphasized by the film's English title.

Other signifiers of political and institutional power accrue around the scene of sleep, folded into the quotidian and fantastical layers of the film's setting. The soldiers are housed in a clinic, isolated as objects of care, observation, and treatment by medical authorities. Not by coincidence, these characters bear the distinction of a demographic whose sleeping habits are subject to the most extreme and cutting-edge methods of monitoring, management, experimentation, and optimization. The main instruments for their care, the machines that light their dreams in changing colors, have a touch of science fiction about them, while the premise that the soldiers' bodies have been drained of vitality by phantom forces likewise echoes a common scenario in science fiction (e.g., *The Matrix*, 1999). The machines also introduce the suggestion that behind the soldiers' disorderly sleep lurk the traumas of other recent wars. A technician off-handedly notes that the same apparatus was used to treat the nightmares of American soldiers in Afghanistan. A nurse comments that they remind her of funeral lights. Furthermore, the clinic has been hastily converted from a former schoolhouse and remains incongruously decorated with the remnants of its previous existence. Visible on its walls are abecedaries and numerical tables, along with images of Thailand's king, its flag, and the bodhisattva—indications of an education emphasizing the three pillars of nation, monarchy, and the official religion of Theravada Buddhism. As writer Kong Rithdee argues, these remnants serve as constant reminders of "a place of learning that is transformed into a laboratory of oblivion."[24] In many of the examples from Western cinema discussed thus far, the journey of sleep begins and ends in the bedroom, but in *Cemetery of Splendor*, the locations of sleep overturn the division between public and private, radiating across a panoply of spaces as they trace a dense matrix of social, political, and historical relationships. The viewer is thus invited to see many things in the film's main setting: a laboratory, a shelter, a resting place, a time machine, or a tomb.

Against this backdrop, the paths of the three main characters converge, and their dreams and memories entangle. As Iggy Cortez observes, the soldiers' "state of vulnerable exposure and corresponding dependency create unforeseen rhythms through which new relational arrangements begin to take form."[25] Jen returns to the schoolhouse of her childhood and volunteers to assist in the care of the soldiers now lodged there. She gravitates to a bed in the corner where she used to sit and turns her attentions to its present occupant, a soldier who, unlike the others, has no relatives to visit him. The two meet for the first time when he suddenly awakens while she bathes his body. The intimacy of the act of rubbing his skin with her bare hands belies their status as strangers to one another, and their eyes meet awkwardly. The charged tenor of this initial meeting persists in the friendship that develops between them, as they develop a routine of sharing meals and each other's company during Itt's waking moments, which come and go at



FIGURE 31. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).

random. Jen refers to Itt as her "son," registering the age difference between them, but also by more playful monikers, like "little pup," when their conversations assume a teasing, flirtatious tone. As their bond deepens, Jen finds herself struggling to stay awake, and a telepathic channel opens up between their dreams. In a scene at the end of the film that mirrors their initial meeting, Itt wakes up in his hospital bed to find Jen asleep, slumped over beside him. Responding to his efforts to rouse her, she drowsily tells him, "Suddenly, I can read your mind. I have seen your dream." To this, Itt replies, "And I have seen yours."

The breakthrough between them, moreover, has been forged with the help of a third party, Keng, the psychic hired by the clinic. In Keng's first appearance early in the film, she displays her ability to bridge the chasm between the sleeping and waking worlds by penetrating other people's dreaming thoughts. Sitting with her eyes closed and resting her hand upon the body of one of the unconscious soldiers, she describes what he sees, feels, and craves to his mother. "He is walking about somewhere. It's dark . . . there's a mound of dirt," she says. In response to the mother's query about what he would like to eat, she reports in the same dreamy voice, "Minced meat and a bamboo shoot soup . . . three chilis is enough." The other characters refer to her psychic abilities in a matter-of-fact fashion, displaying no skepticism. As Keng explains to Jen when they meet, "I've had this gift since I was young. Out of the blue, I could recall my past life as a boy. I fell from a tree and died." The anecdote represents one of numerous instances throughout Apichatpong's films where characters casually mention their memories of past lives (including but not limited to *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*). The only reaction of wonder from Jen comes in the form of a running joke in which she keeps asking Keng if she secretly works for the FBI. Later on, Keng reveals

that her special powers extend to those of a spirit medium, able to incarnate others' spirits in her body; becoming a physical vessel for Itt's spirit while his own body sleeps, she serves as a bridge between Jen and Itt. The progression of the film's story consists in the formation of a three-way circuit of dreams, visions, and desires—a love triangle—between these characters as they travel together beyond the waking world. For them, too, sleep is "a journey into a different territory," says Apichatpong.[26]

In *Cemetery of Splendor*, sleep leads into this "different territory" and parallel realm. This realm is neither the exclusive property of the solitary sleeper, as a Western psychoanalytic mindset would have it, nor solely the fabrication of an individual psyche. Instead, the territories of sleep are crowded places, where others can enter unbidden or by invitation. Phantoms can potentially invade this territory to possess the sleeper, as we find out when Jen is informed about the existence of the ancient cemetery and underworld wars. This knowledge comes from two strangers who approach her as she eats fruit under a *sala* in the park near the clinic. The women introduce themselves as the Laotian goddesses whose shrine is nearby. (The shrine, where some of the film's scenes take place, is a marker of Isaan's regional culture and Laotian history.) In this instance, too, the film does not dramatize the fantastical nature of this encounter. The women are ordinary in their appearance, and when Jen stares at them incredulously after hearing that "both of us are dead," they simply smile at her and help themselves to the fruit on the table. Their message concerning things buried below the surface finds visual reinforcement in the film's recurrent shots of a bulldozer digging up piles of dirt in the vicinity of the clinic. The invocation of the different territory entered via sleep hangs in the air, a transparent presence, heightening the atmosphere of existentially uncertain realism that Ingawanij identifies as a hallmark of Apichatpong's films.

In *Cemetery of Splendor*, to sleep is to find oneself submerged within a past from which it is difficult to break free, like the narrator Marcel, to come into contact with things that have vanished, and to submit to invisible forces. Here, as in Proust's work, its effect is to disorganize time and make the present tense waver. For Apichatpong, however, sleep brings a particular form of double vision that looks beyond the seeming immobility of the present by bringing into focus the afterimages that cling to specific places as traces of their history. This vision activates individual memories but also, importantly, reaches beyond them. These effects come to the fore in the scene of possession. If Jen at first beholds the clinic through the filter of her childhood memory, recalling and envisioning the old schoolhouse that it once was, here she is led to penetrate yet further into its more distant past. During this journey into the territory of sleep, space dissolves into multiple temporal perspectives that phase in and out.

During a morning picnic in the park with Jen, Itt falls asleep in the middle of their meal. Keng joins them under the *sala* and takes advantage of the opportu-

nity to conduct their daily mind-reading session. Resting her hand upon Itt's and closing her eyes, she tells Jen that Itt wants to know if she would like to see what he sees in this dream. "How can I see?" asks Jen. "Through my body," replies Keng. "If so, this would be an amazing afternoon," says Jen. "Goodbye, sister." With these words of parting, Keng slowly turns toward Jen, opens her eyes, and greets her again with a "hello," as if she has become other to herself after being possessed by Itt's spirit. The two proceed to take a leisurely walk through the park, during which Keng-as-Itt shares a sleeping vision that sees beyond present reality, to the Lao kingdoms that previously reigned over the region for hundreds of years before their conquest by the expanding Siamese empire. Their walk takes the form of a tour of the royal palace that once stood on this ground. Stepping into a circle of trees, Keng/Itt shows Jen a princely dressing room encrusted with mirrors, and cautions her not to hit her head as they pass into a sumptuously furnished bedroom. Keng/Itt takes her into a royal bathroom and points out a foot basin carved from pink stone. They cast their gazes downward, and the film cuts to a reverse shot of a spot on the ground covered in dry leaves and shadows of foliage, holding the shot for a beat as if to wait for something to materialize. The viewer is challenged to visualize what was previously here, much as Jen is by her companion. As they continue their wandering, the tension between what is visible and what is conjured by Keng/Itt's words becomes increasingly charged—as when the camera cuts to painted wooden signs mounted on some of the trees that bear moral instructional slogans such as "Hunger for heaven . . . will lead you to hell." Such signs are distributed by the state throughout Thailand's public spaces (including schools and temples), disseminating its authoritative voice and representing the trappings of the modern nation-kingdom that stand in conjunction with the ornaments of the ancient kingdom.

Jen participates in this royal tour with a hint of apprehension, as if a bit unsure of exactly what kind of game they are playing. But along with responding to the cues given by her guide, she also shifts the dynamic by taking the lead, interjecting her own commentary about her memories of the park, and thus introducing other layers to the history it contains. Stopping in front of an old tree, she points out the lines that scar its trunk, marks from a flood that devastated the area several years earlier. They make their way to an area littered with gray stone statues of people, monuments to death and destruction from a more recent period of time. Our first glimpse of these statues comes with a shot of broken fragments—a head, a torso missing its head and arms—strewn on the ground. Over this shot, Jen's off-screen voice states, "Everything looks so luxurious." The stark disjunction between sound and image, between the literal and the residual, is also a reminder of the lethal force with which glorious kingdoms are erected; as Apichatpong notes, "the signs of wealth were always idyllic, omitting the brutalities."[27] They come upon a likeness of a cave protruding from a hillside, in which women and children huddle together for safety. The scene triggers one of Jen's childhood memories from the Cold War



FIGURE 32. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).



FIGURE 33. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).



FIGURE 34. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).

era, when the civil war in neighboring Laos spilled into her village. "This is like when I was young in Nong Khai. Bombs were flying in from Laos. I can remember the siren." As the two meander, their attention shifts between the ancient scenes before them and one another, and the tenor of their talk becomes more intimate. Jen's perspective undergoes a transformation, as if she now sees through the surface of things to what is hidden. She tells her companion, "I see everything clearly now, Itt. At the heart of the kingdom, other than rice fields, there is nothing." Behind the trappings of power is an absence of substance.

In this scene, what appears to be a straightforward action in a unified, continuous space—two characters taking a walk in a park—is transformed into a journey of unfathomable proportions through the lens of sleep. The invitation extended by Itt to Jen to see what he sees frames what follows within a double vision in which physical reality becomes less solid and palpably overdetermined, wavering as if another scene is about to materialize before our eyes, although it never does. The film does not settle the lingering question of what exactly transpires here: is this exchange initiated by Keng as a kind of trick, or has Itt's spirit indeed taken up residence in her body? And is Jen just playing along or actually taken in? Thus, the viewer is held in a state of irresolution, wondering if there is indeed more here than meets the eye. Immaterial realities press in upon the image, undercutting its photographic literalism, thickening its air with a sense of latency, and making it seem simultaneously near and far. Itt's invitation to Jen is also an invitation to the audience to approach the field of the visible in an expanded temporal framework that complicates any notion of real time or present tense. They are prompted to take in the diegetic world as a layered field of traces, indices of large-scale, long-durational historical forces that beg for further comprehension and decoding. As Jen's memories mingle with the primeval retrospection of Keng's narration, the placid surface of the park begins to pulsate with a larger significance, absorbing intimations of power and decay, of splendor and ruination, of bloody conflicts past and present.

The enjoinment to look closely and carefully as one makes one's way amid this charged setting can be taken as a key to how to watch *Cemetery of Splendor*. The film presents an everyday reality blanketed by state propaganda, emblems of militaristic power, and expressions of royalist-nationalist ideology. For the viewer attuned to a "political angle," says Apichatpong, "it's in every frame."[28] For instance, along with the moral maxims found in the park and the pictures on the walls of the clinic, there is a portrait of General Sarit Thanarat prominently displayed in the canteen serving the soldiers. A notorious dictator who ruled Thailand from 1958 to 1963, Sarit seized power in a coup d'état and entrenched his rule by means of an alliance with a restored monarchy and an exploitation of Buddhist symbolism.[29] Just as the likeness of Sarit is displayed throughout public space, his shadow hangs over the events that transpired in May 2014, Kong notes.[30] Prayuth Chan-ocha, the commander-in-chief of the Royal Army, imposed martial law, deposed the

country's democratically elected prime minister in another coup, and assumed leadership of the country. Like Sarit, Prayuth has staked his power upon a foundation of nationalism, royalism, and religion, ruling with the backing of the throne and the country's military and economic elite.[31] *Cemetery of Splendor* was filmed as these events unfolded and takes its cues from the mounting authoritarianism, civil repression, and propaganda ushered in by this phase of military rule. As Kong points out, a "strong, unmistakable sense of social urgency [fills] almost every frame of the film . . . *Cemetery of Splendour* is the first Thai film that responds to the uncertainty—political, personal, historical—of military-ruled Thailand."[32]

Considered in light of this context, the narcoleptic disorder afflicting the soldiers acquires the overtones of a national malady. More than a fictional conceit, it registers a political situation that feels to many like a bad dream, in Kong's words, "a nightmare from which we struggle to awake."[33] In the aftermath of the coup, an ambience of unreality, confusion, and dread takes hold, one that the director compares to a state of not knowing "whether you are asleep or awake."[34] *Cemetery of Splendor* responds to this moment by transporting us inside the zone between sleeping and waking, rather than by direct reference or commentary on recent events. The scene of the sleep clinic functions not just as a narrative anchor, but also as a locus of disorienting effects that emanate from this inceptive source like a fog—seeping throughout diegetic space, encasing the other characters, and rippling the perceptions of the viewer. Even before the episode with Keng/Itt in the park, Jen experiences a shift in her biorhythms, as they begin to synchronize with those of the hypersomniac soldiers. Sleepless at night but unable to stay awake during the day, she is unsure if she is dreaming. "I just want to wake up," she says to Itt.

The viewer might readily identify with Jen's disorientation, given the film's hypnotic tempo, which become more pronounced in its course. The transitions between sleeping and waking experienced by the characters engender an irregular rhythm and meandering flow; these establish the beat of passing time in the absence of other clear-cut markers of dramatic progression. In *Cemetery of Splendor*, as in so many of Apichatpong's other films, it is easy to lose one's temporal bearings—especially as the daylight settings that dominate the film's first third give way to a protracted nocturnal atmosphere. As darkness sets in, the film's mesmerizing lighting effects—all the more striking given the avoidance of other stylistic alterations of the image, such as dissolves or photographic distortions—take center stage. The machines used by the clinic to regulate the soldiers' sleep generate anti-naturalistic permutations of light and color. Cycling through a spectrum of hues in slow and continuous waves, the machines further dislocate the audience's chronological moorings by running interference with their ability to read time from light. They cast a glow that is impossibly intense and saturated, creating a hallucinatory effect as it washes over the image. Under this artificial glow, minutes seem to expand and contract.



FIGURE 35. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).

The effect of crossing over into an altered state of consciousness, even without taking leave of waking reality, comes to a head in a remarkable montage that chains together a series of nocturnal spaces in a dreamy progression. The montage is precipitated by an outing to the movies taken by Jen and Itt. The two sit in a theater watching a trailer for a horror film. A cut abruptly returns us to the clinic, with a low-angle shot of oscillating ceiling fans. The image is tinted in a midnight blue that shades into fuchsia, then red. The next two shots frame the soldiers asleep under the fans along with the source of these changing hues, the tubes of liquid, luminous color that flank their beds. All is quiet except for the low thrum of the ceiling fans and the occasion chirping of insects. An outdoor scene of sleep follows, showing a homeless couple who have camped on the sidewalk for the night. One of them sleeps in a folding lawn chair, and the other on the ground using a stuffed bag as a pillow. A streetlight reflects onto the wall behind these sleepers, on which life-sized relief figures in military uniform can be discerned. Another instance of state propaganda—dating to Sarit's reign of power—the wall mural displays icons of national prosperity, technological achievement, and natural abundance, in ironic contrast with the poverty of the living people in the frame. This is followed by more outdoor scenes: people sitting on the banks of a canal, then another homeless sleeper lying on a bench in a bus shelter. Above him is an illuminated billboard advertising an "EU Wedding Studio," another ironic visual element expressing geopolitical aspiration through signs of love and money. The series returns to the lobby of the movie theater with which it began, where Jen can be glimpsed exiting the theater, followed by two men carrying an unconscious Itt.

As links are forged in this chain of shots, the ambient sounds and visual effects spill beyond the boundaries of each frame, carving out channels through which

other associations may enter. Eerily and in defiance of realism, the repeating waves of color emitted by the light machines inside the clinic cast onto external spaces. They permeate the outdoor scenes and the movie theater as they continue to cycle, so gradually that one might not even consciously register their chromatic transformations on a first viewing, bathing these scenes in blue, green, yellow, red, and purple. Their effect is to contain these various scenes of sleep in separate locations within the ambit of a singular force that is undetectable save for its radiant discharge. The montage ends with an extremely slow and extended cross-fade (the only one in the film) from the movie theater to the clinic once again. The final image in the series is a static long shot of the clinic that symmetrically frames the rows of beds in a receding perspective. Returning to what is by now a familiar location, we rediscover it in a strange and sinister aspect. The soldiers, inert and indistinguishable from one another in their beds, seem to be barely alive, as if fully captive to the phantoms that have possessed them. Meanwhile, objects like the fans and light machines appear to have a life of their own. The shot is held for nearly two full minutes, as the rhythmic pulse of the fans ramps up to a more ominously reverberant drone and a full cycle of colors washes over the image. Invisible forces stir among the still bodies. The viewer is indeed prompted to wonder—is this a laboratory, a shelter, or a tomb?

In *Cemetery of Splendor* and throughout Apichatpong's other works, the presentation of sleep poses a question of place and vulnerability. The philosopher Emmanuel Levinas defines the activity in precisely these terms. To lay down to rest is to enter into a relationship with a place: "we abandon ourselves to a place." To close one's eyes and relinquish vigilance is to give oneself over to a harbor: "Sleep is like entering into contact with the protective forces of a place; to seek after sleep is to gropingly seek after that contact."[35] Notably, the question of protection is less pressing when the place of sleep is firmly underwritten by the right of property. It is telling, in this regard, that the figure who most frequently haunts Marcel's semiconscious musings is his maid Françoise, and not one of his lovers. But by projecting the scene of sleep onto an open, permeable, and public horizon, Apichatpong invites reflection on the precariousness and provisionality of the refuge sought in it. By exposing what cannot be taken for granted by the sleeper, he relates the imagery of sleep to an interrogation of belonging, security, and the distribution of resources and power. Whose sleep must be protected? The social, economic, and national resonance of this interrogation can be traced from the soldiers in the clinic, each plugged into an apparatus of controlled dreaming, to the unhoused figures on the street, likewise awash in a strange light, to the moviegoers in the theater, who also submit to a kind of hypnosis in seeking out the diversions of fictional demons and mythic pasts. As the haze of narcosis spreads, we are reminded of the dystopic edge of the filmic imaginary of the sleeping collective, implying disempowerment, manipulation, and incapacitation. Considering this imaginary, Michael Pigott observes that "to sleep is to be particularly vulnerable to deception,

a passive and prone condition wherein we are subject to being both physically and psychologically manipulated and exploited."[36]

What is the place of these sleepers, their claim to what is handed down from the past, and their share in national belonging? The scenes of sleep in this montage represent various facets of a common experience of dispossession in the aftermath of the coup. Apichatpong's comments on the film emphasize this connection and encourage a political reading of sleep: "There have been endless cycles of coups since 1932 when we changed the government system from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy. We have a cycle of dreams and a cycle of coups."[37] There have been a total of twenty-three coups in Thailand since 1932; for many, this number speaks to the country's failure to establish a stable and legitimate political order.[38] To sleep is to confront the relentlessness of these cycles and the capture of the present within a turbulent timeline of national politics. The double vision of sleep situates the contemporary soldier in a long lineage of wars and reflects on the recent coup through the prism of past struggles for power. The past not only weighs upon current generations, but also exhausts their potential. The nightmares of history replay on an endless loop. And the recognition of the cycles of violence that have shaped modern Thai history is accompanied by the anticipation of more violence to come during a time of political danger. Thus, in *Cemetery of Splendor* the movement back in time precipitated by sleep engenders a mixture of affects that contrast with the bliss of the oceanic memory experienced by Marcel: pain, sadness, and fear.

At the same time, the political significance of sleep cannot be reduced to the stupefied state of mind that authoritarian regimes strive to instill in their subjects. To the extent that sleep expresses a relationship to power, this relationship slides between dispossession—evoking a loss of agency—and nonparticipation—signaling a retreat to a place beyond the reach of power. Just as Dilbar's hibernation "epitomizes the act of waiting and the desire for escape," so in *Cemetery of Splendor* the journey of sleep also delineates a line of flight from a terrible situation in which no immediate solutions are available. More than an individualized retreat, sleep leads toward a collective space in which visions can be shared, memories and stories exchanged and passed on, and an afterlife not defined by fear or threat dreamed into existence. Apichatpong approaches sleep with an attunement to what Crary identifies as its "profound ambiguity," signifying as both "a figure for a subjectivity on which power can operate with the least political resistance *and* a condition that finally cannot be instrumentalized or controlled externally."[39] *Cemetery of Splendor* simultaneously affirms the value of sleep and insists upon the urgency of awakening; these doubled aspects come together in the film's final image of Jen sitting on a bench outside the clinic, her eyes strained wide open as she tries to wake herself up.

These implications of waiting, escape, and circumvention carry a particular weight for the artist living under a despotic regime, unable to address that condi-



FIGURE 36. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).

tion straightforwardly, forced to work around censorship, and on the search for alternatives to "images of guns and blood."[40] *Cemetery of Splendor* was produced under shadow of a lèse-majesté law that, while long used against government critics, has been newly weaponized by the Prayuth regime to imprison large numbers of journalists, political organizers, and artists. (A detail in the mise-en-scène, a notebook in Itt's possession, refers obliquely to this law.[41]) Even despite taking care not to directly address contemporary politics, the film has never been shown in Thailand.[42] When critique and dissent are stifled by a regime that brooks no challenges to its "remystified state ideology," when propaganda is rolled out to remake reality in the image of power, and when, as Kong notes, "every public station shows the same image, when you dictate the citizens' audiovisual reception and tell them what to see and hear," the significance of closing one's eyes and tuning into another reality cannot be discounted.[43] As well as shattering the immobility of the present, then, sleep also creates capillary openings in a situation of political immobilization—release vents that are tenuous, consisting perhaps in nothing more than the preservation of the hope for awakening to a different future. What does Jen see when she stares so intensely in the film's final shot?

6

Insensate Intimacies

The triangular relationship at the center of *Cemetery of Splendor* finds an echo in one of Apichatpong's earlier feature films. *Blissfully Yours* follows a trio comprising a man suffering from an affliction (Min) and two women who care for him, one younger (Roong) and one older (Orn, played by Jenjira Pongpas in her first collaboration with the director). It also begins in a clinical setting, a doctor's office where the two women attempt to procure medicine for Min's painful skin inflammation without divulging his status as an illegal immigrant from Burma. Min remains silent so that he is not betrayed by his accent, while Roong and Orn respond on his behalf to the doctor's suspicious interrogation with a string of convoluted deceptions. From this opening scene, *Blissfully Yours* proceeds toward an ending that fulfills the promise of its title. After a series of fraught exchanges with other figures of authority—the manager of the factory where Roong works and Orn's husband—the trio leaves town and escapes into the jungle for an afternoon of sensual indulgence. They wander among the trees, take in the views, and enjoy a dip in a stream. Orn meets up with her lover for a tryst, while Roong gives unreined expression to her passion for Min. In the film's final scene, the three characters recline lazily by the water, Orn to one side and the young couple to another. In an extended static shot of nearly four minutes, the camera looks down on Roong and Min as they doze off. Roong lies on her side, her face framed in a close-up and hovering at the edge of sleep, while next to her, Min remains still, only his chest rising and falling in a regular rhythm.

At the endpoint of their pursuit of bliss, the lovers discover sleep as a terminal destination and ultimate pleasure. Having already shed their clothing, obligations, and inhibitions, they lay claim to this final experience of release, a vacation in every sense of the term. In pausing on this surrender to sleep and lingering in the slowdown that it brings about, the film draws its viewers into a profound sensorial identification with the characters.[1] In the wake of the harried negotiations required to extricate themselves from the demands of work, and after speeding



FIGURE 37. *Blissfully Yours* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2002).

from place to place to arrange the terms of their truancy, the frenetic activity of the day unwinds into languorous relaxation. Following the characters into the liminal zone of the jungle—a place where, in the words of the director, "any reference to time is removed"—we are called upon to give ourselves over to the digressive streams of reclaimed and newly freed time.[2] To stay with this extended image of sleep is to let go of the expectation of movement or progression, instead becoming absorbed in the patterns of sunlight and shadow playing across their skin, along with the lushly hypnotic sounds of birds, insects, and lapping water that permeate the jungle. In its duration, the close-up magnifies the subtle actions of pulsing breath, fluttering eyelids, and twitching muscles. At the end of exhausting exertion comes the fall of sleep; but if tiredness exists as a "threshold," as Gorfinkel writes, "always at the edge of something else," so too does the phenomenality of sleep manifest most vividly in its incomplete coming and going.[3] This coming and going is registered in the involuntary tremblings of the bodies of Roong and Min, such that the portrayal of sleep shares in the stilled, concentrated micro-drama of *photogénie*.[4] The corporeal signs of wavering consciousness simultaneously point inward, to an interior transformation, and open outward, in connection with a natural landscape of transience. The extended close-up of the two lovers is followed by a shot of clouds undulating in the sky, then one of the mountains covered in foliage stirred by the wind.

The final shot in this sequence, and the very last in the film, returns to the close-up of the lovers, catching Roong as she opens her eyes, turns her head toward the camera, and blinks confusedly. While her position remains unchanged from the



FIGURE 38. *Blissfully Yours* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2002).



FIGURE 39. *Blissfully Yours* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2002).

previous close-up, the lighting of the image is noticeably different, suggesting the passage of a longer interval of time than represented by the actual length of the shots. Roong seems genuinely startled as she turns and looks directly at the camera, as if she had forgotten its presence during her repose. The gaze of the film viewer is mirrored in Roong's look, such that we sense ourselves caught looking. In this moment of heightened situational awareness, a question arises: has Roong been performing the drift of sleep, or has she indeed fallen asleep and woken up during the shoot? The ambiguity is reinforced by the quality of this "performance," composed chiefly of the minute corporeal effects of autonomic processes that typically escape conscious notice and the camera's gaze. The manifestations of the somnolent body derive from a realm beyond deliberate control, voluntary expression, or even the most basic sense of acting, enacting, and doing. To perform sleep is paradoxical in way that performing walking, eating, or kissing is not. The

paradox stems from the location of sleep at the point where embodied existence slips free of volition, as Merleau-Ponty observes. Pondering the question of how we willingly enter a state defined by the absence of self-directed agency, he finds the answer in role-playing. Merleau-Ponty writes, "I lie down in bed . . . I close my eyes and breathe slowly, putting my plans out of my mind. But the power of my will or consciousness stops there. As the faithful, in the Dionysian mysteries, invoke the god by miming scenes from his life, I call up the visitation of sleep by imitating the breathing and posture of the sleeper. The god is actually there when the faithful can no longer distinguish themselves from the part they are playing . . . . There is a moment when sleep 'comes,' settling on this imitation of itself which I have been offering to it, and I succeed in becoming what I was trying to be."[5] If Roong's sleep is real rather than emulated, this is precisely what makes it a successful performance.

The portrayal of sleep here, as in other films by the director, dissolves its usual associations with absenting, withdrawal, and immersion within radical solitude. "In order to fall asleep I sever my social and perceptual involvements," Drew Leder writes in considering sleep as a phenomenon of the absent body.[6] Apichatpong's work, however, formulates a counterproposition insofar as acts of drifting off and waking up compose the relational webs that bind his characters together. Sleep intensifies the bonds of intimacy rather than relegating them to obscurity. The soporific scene with which *Blissfully Yours* ends is but one of a host of sensory delights exchanged among the characters, integrated into a tableau of pleasures that circulate from body to body—as when they feed each other berries picked from a tree, lead one another to hidden spots overlooking spectacular vistas, and pull each other into the water for a cooling dip. The nap shared by Roong and Min comes in the wake of an afternoon of lovemaking; as the token of an easy familiarity, it is coterminous with their other sexual acts. As Roong relaxes by Min's side, just before sleep overtakes her, she reaches over, unzips his shorts, and fondles his penis. Min is not roused from his repose by her touch, except for developing an erection, an involuntary response on the same order of Roong's sleepy tremors and stirrings. The image of their dormant bodies, absorbed in a condition that is "thoroughly woven of trust," conjures an idyllic if ephemeral mode of togetherness; to sleep in the company of another, Barthes argues, is to attain a momentary utopia.[7] Or as Risset succinctly puts it: "Sleeping together—absence doubled, and its opposite."[8]

For Nancy, too, sleep readily evokes the intimacy between lovers, particularly insofar as it marks the denouement of erotic fulfillment. "The happy, languid sleep of lovers who sink down together prolongs their loving spasm into a long suspense," he writes.[9] The fall of sleep follows directly from the orgasmic climax experienced by lovers, extending its pleasurable release and demarcating a postcoital reflux in the rhythm of sex. The positioning of sleep in a sequence of arousal and release is repeated in more explicit terms in another passage: "Cadence, caress,

pendulum motion, to-and-fro of hands, of lips, tongues, and moist genitals, rising and falling of swells, rises and jerks of spasms before return to the long rollers, the deep waves."[10] The substitution of marine entities for human figures in the course of describing this vital choreography, thereby casting the fall of sleep as a return to oceanic depths, is significant in the context of his discussion. For the topic of the sleep of lovers comes up at the precise point when Nancy redirects his focus from the problem of the sleeping self (as a conundrum, or aporia, for the thinking subject intent on producing an account of his sleep) to the question of sleep in the world. With this redirection, he turns from the dormant consciousness to the slumbering body at the same time that he expands the corpus of sleep to include all earthly existence, from the human being to "animals, plants, rivers, seas, sands, stars . . . and ether." All in this chain of being participate equally in sleep, and in this regard, its darkness implicates the awakening of the "first day," Nancy writes, when God made the world and then rested.[11] "Sleep is divine": thus the rocking bodies of lovers echo a "cosmic rhythm," and their rising and falling reprises "the initial beat between something and nothing, between the world and the void."[12] The alternations of sleeping and waking are woven into a biblical origin myth of creation. The lovers to which Nancy refers are not just any lovers. They embody an Adam and Eve, and their sexual coupling represents an act of procreation that Nancy relates to the story of Genesis (appropriately, a baby makes an appearance as he wraps up this line of thought). After asserting the impossibility of a phenomenology of sleep, Nancy proposes in its place a theology of sleep.

The scene of drowsy lovers in *Blissfully Yours* also relates the flows of energies across bodies to the currents that animate the physical world. The cut from Roong's face as her consciousness fades to shots of the sky and the mountains invites an analogy between body and landscape, positioning sleep on the order of natural forces—like a cloud momentarily passing by or a wind that suddenly stirs. But for Apichatpong, these analogical relationships are shaped by an animistic cosmology and structure of experience, as May Adadol Ingawanij points out; the "movement of *anima*" engenders unpredictable flows that disrupt the linearity of time and erode the stability of forms and identities.[13] Thus, the onset of sleep is not situated in the direct aftermath of sexual consummation. Rather, a sleepy feeling suffuses the erotic haze in which the lovers are surrounded. Roong's caresses are slow and languid, while Min barely stirs in response to the touch of her hand. Waves of pleasure rise to the surface, but instead of building to an ejaculatory climax that hearkens back to a mythic origin of life, they reactivate the memory of other moments of sensual contact that have transpired throughout the film, rippling outward and taking their time before they dissipate. To the extent that bliss spreads through multiple channels, sleep itself carries an erotic charge.

Desiring and pleasuring assume multifarious forms in Apichatpong's films—as innumerable as the shifting shapes of *anima*—connecting male bodies, female bodies, and the bodies of different species. While *Blissfully Yours* depicts the rendezvous of heterosexual couples, *Tropical Malady* centers on a romance between

two men, Keng and Tong. The first half of the film narrates Keng's courtship of the younger man, and in the second half, Tong transforms into a tiger spirit who, in turn, pursues Keng while the latter patrols the jungle. The two lovers, soldier and tiger, come face to face in the final scene, as a voice-over belonging to the tiger declares, "Once I've devoured your soul, we are neither animal nor human." As Arnika Fuhrmann argues, this ending "is the film's most dramatic sex scene," presenting at once an "obliteration," a "fusion," and a "fulfillment of desire."[14] The motif of interspecies coupling is picked up in *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, during an episode in which a lonely princess is brought to the heights of sexual rapture by a catfish. The sense of "polymorphous desiring," of ubiquitous attraction and possibility that Fuhrmann identifies in *Tropical Malady*, also pervades the director's larger corpus. The queer sexual universe that comes into being across this corpus is constituted by not only expressions of same-sex desire, but also heightened transferences and "communicability across genders and sexual orientations of affective, sensory, and material pleasures."[15] As much as sleep builds new relational networks in his films, it infuses this exchange across bodies, genders, and orientations, giving rise to queer modes of intimacy.

Such effects frame another reading of the journey of sleep in *Cemetery of Splendor*. The walk through the trees taken by Jen and Keng/Itt concludes with what can likewise be described as the film's most dramatic sex scene—an exchange of extraordinary intensity that also detonates all previous definitions of a sex scene, as affecting as it is ambiguous. Their tour of the royal palace that once stood on the grounds comes to an end with the two characters resting on a bench in a secluded corner of the park. Jen continues to address Keng as if she is no longer herself, having become possessed by Itt's spirit while he sleeps. She hikes up her pant leg to reveal the deep scars running across her right thigh, the result of a traumatic motorcycle accident sustained by Pongpas in 2003, and says, "My right leg is 10cm shorter than the left." Keng/Itt looks around and says, "Here, Jen, I can sense every smell," an inexplicable repetition of a comment made by Itt in an earlier scene at which Keng was not present. Jen mixes a medicinal herbal powder into a bottle of water and hands it her companion, to help with his malady, and the feeling that motivates this gesture of offering is emphasized by her words: "You know, when you're asleep, even the bright city lights feel dull." Keng/Itt responds, "No one has said that to me before." S/he comes to her knees in front of Jen, massaging her exposed leg and pouring the tonic over her skin. "What are you doing?" Jen asks in bewilderment, to which Keng/Itt replies, "It's therapy . . . trust me." Crouching on the ground, s/he proceeds to lick Jen's leg. The camera maintains its position of discrete distance during this long single take, as Keng/Itt licks up and down her ankle, calf, and thigh. Jen's reaction shifts from self-conscious discomfort to gratification to, finally, an outburst of emotions that are difficult to parse precisely. A sob wells up from inside her and breaks through in an outburst of weeping. She regards Keng/Itt lovingly as her body is wracked by surges of grief and anguish.



FIGURE 40. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).

What we witness here is a coupling and a profound release, but of what kind, and who exactly does it involve? Despite his physical absence from the scene, Itt nonetheless seems to be present, not only in Jen's perception but also in the words and thoughts spoken by Keng. Therefore, what transpires is a sex scene between Jen and the sleeping soldier, a communion that dramatically caps the friendship, amorous feelings, and "synchronicity" between the two characters. The tactile language through which this communion finds expression, although in many respects perplexing, refers back to and builds upon their very first meeting earlier in the film. Lying in his hospital bed, Itt visibly awakens while Jen rubs a cleansing cream on one of his legs, his pant pulled up to expose his calf and thigh just as Jen's is in the later scene. The conjoining of pleasuring, healing, and bathing in the motions of pouring the tonic and licking Jen's leg is mirrored in this earlier episode, in the deliberate care with which Jen massages the cream into Itt's skin and the eroticism that infuses her gestures of care. She derives discernible sensory gratification from the feel of his bared flesh, so absorbed in her actions that several moments pass before she even notices that he has regained consciousness. The parallels between the two scenes include the characters' exposure to each other in their most vulnerable aspect: Jen in the disability that results from her accident, and Itt in his incapacitating illness. The image of Itt in his hospital bed, moreover, echoes a set of photographs made by Apichatpong in the aftermath of Pongpas's accident, documenting the treatments she endured.[16]

In this regard, these encounters instantiate the "crip seduction" that Brian Bergen-Aurand identifies in Apichatpong's films, residing in their ongoing engagement with "nonnormate embodiments" that sex disability and disable sex.[17] Following Bergen-Aurand's prompt and viewing these scenes through the lens of



FIGURE 41. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).



FIGURE 42. *For Tomorrow, For Tonight* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2011). Courtesy of Kick the Machine.

crip theory, we can articulate their queering effect as explorations of the avenues of arousal emerging across an "open mesh of possibilities . . . when the constituent elements of bodily, mental, or behavioral functioning aren't made (*or can't be made*) to signify monolithically."[18]

The unusual gestural vocabulary of *Cemetery of Splendor* also draws from Apichatpong's earlier films, in which pleasure is often conducted by oral means and ingestive processes. In *Tropical Malady*, Tong ravenously licks Keng's hands and arm, foreshadowing the devouring that will later transpire. The rectangular tub of cream that Jen applies to Itt in the clinic is identical to the container of medicinal

lotion that Roong and Orn apply to Min's inflamed skin in *Blissfully Yours*, bizarrely concocted by them from moisturizer and chopped-up vegetables—in an interview, Apichatpong even refers to it as "the same cream."[19] It contains ingredients intended for oral consumption, like the herbal mixture Keng/Itt pours over Jen's injured leg. Communication between bodies is mediated by the assimilation of substances and supplements. If lines get crossed in this process, leading to a confusion between digestive and topical modes of incorporation, so too can bodies substitute for one another and exchange positions. Even while emphasizing the traces of Itt's presence, *Cemetery of Splendor* simultaneously presents a sex scene that literally involves two women. If Keng seems to speak in Itt's voice at certain moments, she also appears exactly as who she is—a young woman who, along with being a professional psychic, supports herself by means of other side hustles. Her sexuality is as hard to pin down as her backstory: at several points it is implied that Keng lacks a basic familiarity with male anatomy. The sex scene does not relegate her to the role of a vanishing mediator between the other characters. In this respect, it portrays a ménage à trois as well as a coupling. The sleep under whose shadow the scene unfolds allows these different relational configurations to coexist without canceling one another out. The conjunction of sleep and sex marks a zone of undecidability, unstable embodiment, and queer transferences. These dynamics find their cause and origin in Itt's insensate state, and his sleeping body serves as the unseen nexus of this affective circuit.

Is Jen drawn to Itt's bed when she first enters the clinic because of her memories of her time as a student when the building operated as a schoolhouse, as she claims, or for other reasons? Itt's attractive physicality, in addition to having a clear effect on her in the caretaking scene described above, is remarked on by the other characters, who refer to him as "the handsome soldier." *Blissfully Yours* contains a portent of their relationship: at one point Pongpas's character Orn says of Min, "he's so handsome when he sleeps." Sleeping men are presented as beautiful bodies, figures of love, and objects of desire throughout Apichatpong's work, and not only in his feature films. Returning to *Teem*, which presents its titular subject asleep on three video channels, we find another example of this mode of portrayal. Jen's regard of the narcotic soldier in his hospital bed is supplanted by the camera's perspective on Teem as he sleeps in the bedroom previously shared with the artist. This perspective is subjective, embodied, and affectively animated, generated by means of a mobile phone camera that registers the hand in which it is held and the presence of the filmmaker's body. The shots are shaky and restless, in contrast to Teem's stillness, constantly changing their angle as they track over his figure from head to toe. Like Jen's hands, the camera caresses Teem's body; at one point, Apichatpong's hand enters the frame and their fingers intertwine.

The three videos of the installation suggest an abundant fascination with the sleeping figure of the beloved, a fascination that is redolent of certain moments in *In Search of Lost Time*, when Marcel fixates on his lover Albertine while she



FIGURE 43. *Teem* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2007). Courtesy of Kick the Machine.

sleeps in a bedroom in his house. In *The Albertine Workout*, Anne Carson points out that Albertine "is present or mentioned on 807 pages of Proust's novel" and that "on a good 19% of these pages she is asleep."[20] Marcel indulges a seemingly insatiable desire to absorb every inch of Albertine's face and body, detailed by the author in long descriptive passages. Likewise, Apichatpong's camera moves restlessly around and over Teem, exploring his body like a landscape, shifting its focus from one detail (his left eye) to another (a hand or foot poking out from under the covers). Considered alongside each other, these two works show how sleep intensifies the mechanisms of desire by bringing out an alien part of the beloved, an opaque aspect that subsists beyond the scope of waking interactions. In her unconsciousness, Albertine seems to withdraw to somewhere distant from the place that she and Marcel currently occupy, and this absence-in-presence increases the narrator's feelings of love. "She was animated only by the unconscious life of plants, of trees, a life more different from my own, stranger, and yet which I possessed more securely."[21] Suspecting that Albertine prefers women to men, consumed by jealousy and the compulsion to control, Marcel transmutes this distance and difference into the very possibility of intimacy. He identifies the otherness of sleep with a condition of insentient thingness that gratifies his wish to overcome the resistance of Albertine's subjectivity: "Watching her, holding her in my hands, I felt that I possessed her completely, in a way I never did when she was awake."[22] The desire aroused by the sleeping woman sets into motion a fantasy of total power over this figure, a point to which this chapter will return.[23]

Like Marcel, Apichatpong's camera stares and stares, while Teem neither looks back nor betrays any awareness of being filmed, absorbed entirely in something that eludes capture by the camera. But Apichatpong does not construe the opaque otherness of the sleeper in such fetishistically possessive terms. Teem's lack of responsiveness signals not a retreat into objecthood so much as a condition of inaccessibility, of having left his nonsleeping partner behind on a journey to somewhere the latter cannot access. The asymmetrical relationship between the watcher and the sleeper resides less in a belonging to than a waiting for. To watch the sleeping beloved is to wait through the dead time of slumber, anticipating the return to a shared reality. Apichatpong bides this time by recording Teem. When Teem wakes up in one of the videos, the effect is like "the end of a journey," and the two greet each other affectionately as if reunited after a separation.[24]

Apichatpong's portrayal of the dormant male body connects with a larger group of works that frame this figure within a queer gaze. As a video portrait of the filmmaker's partner at the time, *Teem* readily calls to mind Andy Warhol's *Sleep* (1964), a silent film composed of footage of the artist's then-lover John Giorno asleep. *Sleep* was the first film project undertaken by Warhol, shot by him with a handheld Bolex on black-and-white low-light film stock. The view of the camera again stands in for the intimate gaze of the lover, a gaze that is also "the caress that does not awaken."[25] It admires the handsome sleeper—"His face. Oh it's so beautiful," says Warhol—with a stamina that draws from the deepest wells of ardor.[26] The film's extreme length of five hours and twenty minutes offers a reminder of the fascination that the sleeping body holds for someone in love, a fascination that perhaps can only be sustained in love. But *Sleep* is at once much more and much less than what its running time suggests. As Giorno recalls in his memoir, Warhol came up with the concept during a summer weekend with friends in Connecticut, and the actual shooting took place over many nights spanning the period of July, August, and October 1963. Giorno, a heavy sleeper, describes leaving his door unlocked for Warhol, who took amphetamines in this period, to enter in the dead of night and shoot for several hours. "The process had an empty and caressing quality," he recalls, and his own experience of it consisted of waking up in the morning to find empty yellow Kodak boxes scattered on the floor.[27] This process resulted in 47 original reels of film footage.[28] The final cut of *Sleep* was assembled from only nine of these reels, cut into sequences of repeating patterns, projected at silent speed, and distilling many nights into a single continuous performance of sleep (and obversely, a record of the filmmaker's drug-induced insomnia).

Like *Teem, Sleep* ranges over the geography of the sleeping body, breaking down its familiar appearance into a multitude of defamiliarizing angles and croppings, a compendium of part objects each given its minutes in the spotlight. The film's first shot is a close-up view of Giorno's stomach as it rises and falls with his breath, an image that evokes a warm and lazy eroticism. *Sleep* similarly establishes an uncanny orientation to a subject who is at once very near and far removed,



FIGURE 44. *Sleep* (Andy Warhol, 1963). The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA, a museum of Carnegie Institute. All rights reserved. Courtesy of The Andy Warhol Museum.

in a state that renders him both fully available for close inspection and obdurately inaccessible. It also heightens the contradiction between the stillness and monotony of a "recurrent visual constant" and the dynamism of an image set into motion at many levels by "minute, fleeting, and unpredictable perceptual changes," as Branden Joseph has observed.[29] While the individual shots are static—in contrast to *Teem* where the camera never stays still, an extension of the filmmaker's restive body—a complex pattern of shifting views emerges in the film's editing. This generates a highly destabilized perspective and, as many have noted, makes it hard to look away from the screen. The viewing of *Sleep* is often recounted as a perceptual experience that reverses one's initial expectations, an encounter with a startling play of difference rather than sameness. And even the viewers who eventually tire of sleep might find themselves fascinated all over again by the granular effects of the slowed projection, their attention re-aroused by the mesmerizing dance of elementary particles that never pause. In *Sleep*, Juan Suárez writes, "Grain works as an undertow against the general stasis . . . . it animates the sleeping body and the surrounding space, it heightens the abstractions of many of the frames."[30]

Apichatpong has pointed to Warhol as an influence on his filmmaking (along with the fact that they share the same initials), although without mentioning specific works.[31] Even if it remains unclear whether *Teem* was inspired by *Sleep*, a comparison between the two films illuminates their divergent approaches to a queer erotics of sleep. Considered alongside the tight cropping, selective views, and intricate editing of *Sleep*, the casual, playful, and diaristic quality of Apichatpong's footage emerges in stark contrast.[32] Despite their similarity as durational portraits of sleeping lovers, *Teem* betrays little interest in the formal study of light and shadow that occupies its counterpart. Rather than the realm of abstraction, it locates sleep in a concrete setting that incorporates the textures and rhythm of everyday life. With its display of three separate videos shot on three different mornings, *Teem* unfolds in the temporal framework of the quotidian; as a "daily portrait," it is embedded in the stream of ongoing time rather than, like *Sleep*, abstracted from it. Apichatpong's casual attitude extends to his positioning of himself in the work and in relation to his slumbering partner. While *Sleep* is marked by a hushed reverence for its subject, or at some points even a stealthiness that suggests the filmmaker tiptoeing around Giorno in an effort not to disturb his sleeping beauty, such consideration is not offered to Teem. The making of the video interrupts his rest. In an email exchange with the historian Benedict Anderson, who late in his life befriended the filmmaker, Apichatpong confesses to having woken

up Teem by fellating him in one of the videos.[33] For the viewer armed with this information, it is difficult to resist scanning the installation for evidence. In one of the videos, Teem opens his eyes and closes them again; his jaw muscles tighten as the shot becomes even wobblier.

Sleep incorporates a visual allusion to the same sex act, as Jonathan Flatley points out. In its longest-running shot, the camera hovers in space above Giorno's groin area to frame his upper torso. "Our longest view is the one [we] might have of Giorno if we looked up at his face while fellating him," Flatley writes, an act "that Giorno describes Warhol performing on him with enthusiasm and skill."[34] Notwithstanding this encoding of corporeal memory, no oral sex transpires in *Sleep;* the blow job must wait for a time, place, and film of its own, which Warhol would indeed deliver later in the same year.[35] The collocation of sleep and sex, and the contrast between allusive and actualized eroticism, shed light on the complex relationship between looking and touching in *Sleep*. On the one hand, the camera's gaze enacts a kind of caress and expresses a tactile yearning. On the other hand, its caress is "empty," to recall Giorno's description; the body has been subtracted, the hand displaced by the eye, and physical contact forestalled. A distanciated perspective comes to reign over *Sleep*, along with a coldness that crosses over toward deathliness, as Joseph discerns.[36] *Teem*'s affinity thus resides less with *Sleep* than with another filmic portrait of the unconscious Giorno that hibernates unseen in Warhol's archive. This footage, from an early "rehearsal" shoot in Connecticut of Giorno napping outside in a hammock, "was beautiful—loving, very gay, the classic Greek and Roman god, male beauty. Everything that Andy would make sure not to include in the final cut of *Sleep*, which was about light and shadow."[37] Given the opportunity to view this footage fifty years later, Giorno describes a tactile sensation and another kind of caressing look: "The curators gushed over the shadows of the leaves as they moved with the wind on my skin, an abstract painting. But I got a different rush. It felt like Andy was kissing or licking my skin with the camera, which is what he liked to do. Andy was making love to me with the camera while I slept!"[38]

The work of the Taiwan-based filmmaker Tsai Ming-liang is also replete with quietly sleepy moments and somnolent figures, from feature films like *Vive L'Amour* (1994) and *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* (2006) to experimental shorts like *No No Sleep* (2015). *Vive L'Amour* centers on another trio of thieves of time: a real estate agent; a street hawker she meets for occasional hookups; and Hsiao Kang, a young man who shares the same nickname of the actor who plays him, Tsai's longtime collaborator and muse Lee Kang-sheng. The place where their paths crisscross is situated in the center of the concrete jungle of Taipei, an uninhabited luxury apartment to which they steal away to escape their everyday lives and indulge in their fantasies and cravings. The realtor and the street hawker use the apartment as a trysting place; Hsiao Kang, who cuts a poignantly lonely figure in this film, also uses it as a private retreat for self-experimentation, where he can cross-dress and dance in front of the mirror away from prying eyes.



FIGURE 45. *Vive L'Amour* (Tsai Ming-liang, 1994).

At the end of the film, Hsiao Kang finds himself in the comically awkward position of being stuck under the bed while the other two have sex. After the woman leaves, he ventures out to find the man, Ah Rong, supine and fast asleep. Hsiao Kang tiptoes out of the bedroom, pauses, then doubles back to fix a gaze of painful yearning on Ah Rong. From this point, time slows down, movement shifts into a delicately hesitant register, and a wordless romance ensues. Hsiao Kang carefully drapes himself at the edge of the bed. He slowly draws closer, never tearing his eyes from Ah Rong's face, and assumes a supplicating pose. He closes his eyes, as if to share in a few moments of this transfixing sleep, when Ah Rong suddenly shifts position and faces him. Hsiao Kang inches closer, lays the lightest of kisses on Ah Rong, and gives him one last longing look before pulling himself away. The message of the kiss is deflected by the impenetrable wall of slumber, rebounding from an absence that does not communicate. Like so many overtures to connection in Tsai's films, this one ultimately results in failure. But at the same time, Ah Rong's sleep is the lure that draws Hsiao Kang's feelings into the visible open, the precondition for acting them out. For Tsai, desire assumes its most tangible expression in suspended moments of inactivity, in missed connections and encounters, and in the gaps of attention and contact. Even as sleep enables the release of inchoate desires, it is also a reminder of the radical solitude from which these characters obtain only temporary release (unlike Apichatpong's characters).

The kiss in *Vive L'Amour* represents the first explicit expression of same-sex desire by Hsiao Kang. His character embarks on other sexual adventures and misadventures in the films that follow. Unconscious states continue to be woven into a finely tuned choreography of tentative yearnings, bad timings, and unreciprocated gestures. In later films, Hsiao Kang comes to occupy the position of the

reclining sleeper rather than that of the alert watcher. He becomes an increasingly immobilized figure who elicits both a desiring gaze and a caring touch, a body that displays its beauty but also the abrasions of age, exertion, and illness. Thus, the positions of sleeper and watcher set forth in *Vive L'Amour* are reversed in *No No Sleep*, the seventh installment in the suite of short films known as the Walker series. The titular "walker" refers to Lee's incarnation as Xuanzang, a Chinese monk from the seventh century whose pilgrimage to India played a crucial role in the transmission of Buddhism to China. While all the Walker films show Lee dressed as a monk and walking in very slow motion in various cities around the world (Taipei, Hong Kong, Kuching, Marseille), this installment affords him a pause in his journey. *No No Sleep* begins with Lee walking in the streets of Tokyo and ends up with him in a capsule hotel with a sauna, where he takes the opportunity to shed his heavy robes, bathe, and rest his weary body.

The sight of Lee as he lies in a soaking tub and settles into a lethargic stupor offers a visceral reminder of the physical labor entailed in his performance as the walker, along with the corporeal tolls inflicted by his highly controlled manner of extreme slow motion. *No No Sleep* anticipates Lee's appearance in the feature film *Days* (2020), in which the actor is similarly flattened by painful exhaustion, barely able to maintain an upright position as he seeks relief from his ailments, and ultimately finds such relief in a touch that gives both pleasure and care. In the sauna, the only other bather present is a young man, of about the same age as Hsiao Kang in *Vive L'Amour* and giving off a similar air of antsy loneliness. He takes a seat next to Lee in the soaking tub and lingers by his side. Attraction whispers and the anticipation of contact is sparked; below the surface of the water that distorts and refracts the contours of their bodies, their arms even seem to touch, as Nicholas de Villiers observes.[39] But while Lee clearly notices the young man's presence, he cannot be moved to respond. In contrast to his incarnation from twenty years ago, he is now too tired to rouse himself from his stupor. The film ends with a pair of two identically framed static long takes (of more than three minutes each) of the two men, together in the bathhouse but alone in separate resting chambers, the young Japanese man tossing restlessly and Lee sound asleep.

With *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone*, Tsai returned to his birth country of Malaysia, shooting in Kuala Lumpur and composing a story around a trio of characters who reflect this particular setting—a homeless man, a migrant construction worker, and a domestic worker, all figures of economical marginalization and displacement. Lee plays a double role: the homeless man, who is beaten into unconsciousness at the beginning of the film, and a man with a paralyzing medical condition under the care of the domestic worker. Once again the state of slumber is situated in adjacency to injury and disability. The homeless Hsiao Kang sleeps excessively in order to heal from physical trauma, while in contrast, restorative rest seems out of reach for his counterpart, who is frozen both in his body and in time, his eyes staring without blinking in an interminable wakefulness. Hsiao Kang meets his



FIGURE 46. *No No Sleep* (Tsai Ming-liang, 2015).

watcher in a Bangladeshi migrant worker named Rawang. After dumpster-diving an old mattress, Rawang and his roommates come across Hsiao Kang passed out on the street, like one more discarded object. They bring him back home wrapped up in the mattress, which in the course of the film becomes "the entire world," in the words of Yvette Bíró; "wretched and torn, clearly condemned to death, the mattress can nonetheless be temporarily revived and made useable with devotion."[40]

Along with reviving the mattress, Rawang nurses Hsiao Kang back to life and develops feelings for him in the process. The relationship of the sleeper with the one who watches over him is formed around an ethics and erotics of care, breaking the association of sleep with solitude in Tsai's earlier work and anticipating *Cemetery of Splendor* in its commingling of looking at with looking after. Here, too, the touch that heals is one of desire. The tenderness with which Rawang ministers to Hsiao Kang contrasts with the brutal efficiency with which the domestic worker attends to the paralyzed double who is under her charge. This character (played by another of Tsai's longtime collaborators, Chen Shiang-chyi) seems herself numbed by the mistreatment of her employer, the paralyzed man's mother: after a disturbing episode in which the latter sexually abuses her, she cries herself to sleep in the attic crawl space that serves as her bedroom. When Hsiao Kang and Shiang-chyi become amorously entangled, drama ensues, along with a battle for possession of the mattress. *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* resolves the conflict with its hauntingly beautiful final shot of Rawang, Hsiao Kang, and Shiang-chyi slumbering peacefully on the mattress as it drifts in a black pool of water. Theirs is a utopic sleep that stands for the antithesis of solitude, envisioning a queer intimacy among this threesome. It is a reversible image that joins together, on the one hand, "the sense of displacement and impermanence"



FIGURE 47. *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* (Tsai Ming-liang, 2006).



FIGURE 48. *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* (Tsai Ming-liang, 2006).

that defines these characters and, on the other hand, the bliss of finding a place together and a hope for world-making.[41] Their sleep presents an instance of the "utopian aperture" that Rey Chow identifies in Tsai's films, in which "the obvious destitution and deviance of his characters—lonesome, inarticulate, mysteriously ill, sexually perverse, morally anarchic—[become] elements of a different sensorium and sociality."[42]

The slumbering trio of *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* finds an echo in the love triangle of *Cemetery of Splendor*. In both films, the desiring dyad of the couple makes way for other assemblages of bodies, pleasures, and objects. And as this ending suggests, for both Tsai and Apichatpong, somnolence lays the ground for the unforeseeable connections, eccentric mediations, and redirected attachments that emerge to coalesce a queer imaginary. This imaginary is as evanescent as the blissful unconsciousness in which Rawang, Shiang-chyi, and Hsiao Kang cohere, drifting in the void and borne aloft by the precious beaten-up mattress. Here sleep seems to provide protection and repair, delaying for one more minute the bursting

of the bubble of togetherness, much as sleep provides a sort of refuge for Jen, Keng, and Itt. Nonetheless, the similarities between the two filmmakers only go so far. Notable differences also distinguish their respective approaches to sleep as an element in a tableau of queer intimacy, differences that bear upon sex and gender. Turning to another of Tsai's films, one that features yet another ménage à trois, I consider how the unconscious woman calls into question the ready equation of sleep with utopic relationality.

In *Cemetery of Splendor*, narcosis spreads like a fog, gradually encasing everyone in its fold. But in Tsai's films, as we have seen, sleep more commonly operates as a basis for asymmetrical pairings that bring together an exhausted, oblivious body with an intent observer who is alert with desire. Encounters between sleepers and watchers take their place in a spreading web of strange corporeal geometries, without necessarily reflecting clearly on the orientation and identity of the bodies caught within this web. In what is perhaps Tsai's most controversial film, *The Wayward Cloud* (2005), Hsiao Kang and Shiang-chyi are brought back together after having haunted each other's thoughts and vainly searched for each other in two previous films. Roaming around a park under the blazing summer sun, Shiang-chyi discovers Hsiao Kang asleep on a swinging bench. She takes a seat and stares at him while waiting patiently for him to awaken. In the hiatus of sleep, time again slows down and Shiang-chyi nods off herself. She comes back to as Hsiao Kang stirs, shakes off his grogginess, and returns her gaze. His awakening marks a miraculous reunion and a mutual recognition, paving the way for an emotional and erotic bond between them that develops in the course of the film. Shiang-chyi plays the active role in their relationship, initiating sexual contact, while Hsiao Kang demonstrates a reluctance or inability to follow through, his desires remaining somewhat opaque. Perhaps he defers because he is too depleted by his work as a pornographic actor. Unbeknownst to Shiang-chyi, he spends his days shooting films in the same apartment building where she lives, working on another floor with a small crew and a co-star who is played by the Japanese porn star Sumomo Yozakura. *The Wayward Cloud* incorporates numerous pornographic scenes of Hsiao Kang at work, often from a behind-the-scenes perspective that emphasizes the monotonously grueling nature of his job.

The situation comes to light when Shiang-chyi discovers Yozakura on the floor of the building's elevator, passed out and completely unresponsive. While the story is launched by an awakening from sleep that is also an awakening of desire, it veers toward closure with this sudden unexplained onset of coma. As Vivian Lee notes, in contrast to Shiang-chyi's sexual agency and desiring gaze, Yozakura is "increasingly objectified and silenced" until she is finally reduced to a wholly passive state.[43] Despite her lack of consciousness, she plays a crucial part in the final act of *The Wayward Cloud*, which presents a long-awaited consummation of a romance (as well as the completion of a failed attempt at fellatio from earlier in the film). Shiang-chyi and one of the men from the crew carry Yozakura back to the



FIGURE 49. *The Wayward Cloud* (Tsai Ming-liang, 2005).

apartment that serves as a film set. They carry on with their work, manipulating her like a rag doll on the bed while Hsiao Kang pounds her with manic energy and the camera rolls. Shiang-chyi watches them through an opening in the wall above the bed, with a look of dismay that turns into fascination, and Hsiao Kang watches her in turn. The film cuts back and forth between their faces as they become increasingly aroused by this exchange—a purely visual contact that is mediated by Yozakura as a third party, also visible in the frame and positioned between them—and begin to vocalize their pleasure. Hsiao Kang grunts and groans, while Shiang-chyi emits ecstatic whimpers and screams that seem to ventriloquize the unconscious woman. Yozakura's inert body is the visible nexus of this affective circuit. On the verge of orgasm, he dashes over to the window and inserts his penis into Shiang-chyi's open mouth. The final four minutes of the film linger on this climax and long-deferred sexual fusion.

The Wayward Cloud's graphic depictions of intercourse, oral sex, and masturbation (along with some other sex acts that resist succinct definition) account for the film's divided critical reception. While Tsai's previous films did not shy away from transgressive portrayals of sexuality, *The Wayward Cloud* goes even further in its interjection of the defining elements of the most culturally devalued of film genres, pornography, into the arena of international art cinema. To a large degree, negative reactions to the film have focused on its ending, descried by many as misogynistic in its treatment of the female body. This response is encapsulated in a widely circulated anecdote about the first screening of *The Wayward Cloud* at the Brisbane International Film Festival. As Hsiao Kang appears to ejaculate in the final scene, an audience member stood up, yelled "FUCK YOU!" at the screen, and stormed out, followed by a few others in the theater. The incident is recounted by Helen Bandis, Adrian Martin, and Grant McDonald in an essay that defends Tsai from the charge of misogyny and closely analyzes this admittedly shocking ending in light of the film's unique symbolic economy and the structure of alternation and repetition established throughout his filmography.[44]

The detour performed by these critics, from a literal reading of the film in its mimetic appropriation of pornographic content to a formal reading of its self-conscious deconstruction and recombination of cinematic codes, is repeated by others who have defended the film from its detractors. Lee analyzes *The Wayward Cloud* as a critique of, rather than an exercise in, pornography, one that vacates the patriarchal and sexist values commonly attributed to the genre. On the controversial ending, she writes, "Instead of being a reconfirmation of heterosexual union as the norm and solution to the characters' identity crises, hence the fulfilment of phallic fantasy, the *pathos* of Hsiao-kang's performance of masculine sexuality is a sign of its exhaustion."[45] Song Hwee Lim also makes the case that this ending "illustrates forcefully and critiques unequivocally the exploitation of the sexed-up female body."[46] Furthermore, to equate penetrative sex acts with a performance of domination that reinscribes hierarchies of power is to overlook the queer corporeal-relational matrix in which these acts are embedded. Gorfinkel argues, "To suggest that the extended final scene . . . is somehow misogynistic is to entirely miss the point of the film's queer formalist allegory." Heterosexual relations are rendered as an impossibility by the film, such that they "cannot exist or reproduce themselves, but can only be produced through a mediating form, a third term, an act of projection or displacement."[47] Or conversely, the realization of love in a world defined by alienation, loss, and deadened affect relies upon a defamiliarized gestural language of intimacy that reimagines what a body can do, how it can express, and how it can connect with other bodies. Weihong Bao observes that throughout *The Wayward Cloud*, Hsiao Kang and Shiang-chyi "are often framed in a constricted space to exercise intense, mutually interactive acts that result in bodily reassembling and mismatch."[48] These acts, or biomechanical exercises, achieve at once a scrambling of normative gender roles, a reorganization of their bodies, and a redefinition of sexuality and love, Bao argues.[49] Drawing on the director's background in avant-garde theater while also integrating the hyperbolic physicality of body genres like pornography, these exercises constitute an innovative "performance practice" that queers the display of sex.[50]

With careful attention to *The Wayward Cloud*'s modes of bodily display and performance, these critics offer an important counterargument to those who have read the film's pornographic scenes at face value. As they persuasively demonstrate, to collapse these explicit depictions of sex within the category of pornography is to overlook Tsai's project of queer world-making. My own understanding of *The Wayward Cloud* has long been informed by the insights of these and other feminist and queer thinkers, sharing in their conviction of the director's significant interventions in the politics of sexuality. Revisiting the film at this moment in time, some fifteen years after its release, however, I find that these arguments do not sufficiently account for the part played by Yozakura in its culminating scene of three-way sex. Feminist and queer readings of this scene have tended to abstract her role by emphasizing her allegorical function—whether as a caricature of the

exploitation of women's bodies by commercial media, illustrating their reduction to passive objects to be consumed (a reading encouraged by Yozakura's status as a real-life porn star), or as just another of the inanimate things onto which Hsiao Kang and Shiang-chyi project their attraction to one another. Yozakura becomes the vanishing mediator of their sexual apotheosis, not only manipulated like a human-sized sex toy, but in the last instance ejected from the frame altogether. If the gendered hierarchies that structure heterosexual coupledom can be set askew by queer triangulations, in *The Wayward Cloud* they recover their force at the point of the objectified female body.

Yozakura, unlike the other sleepers discussed throughout this chapter, resists the attribution of queer possibility, and not only because her unconsciousness lacks the responsiveness of natural sleep. Literal reference thwarts allegorical function when her body is framed by a contemporary context in which incidents of sexual assault on unconscious women have received unprecedented public scrutiny, through the channels of news media as well as firsthand accounts of the victims of these assaults.[51] This public scrutiny goes hand in hand with a legal and social struggle to define sexual assault in terms of the absence of consent on the part of the victim, as opposed to the exercise of brute physical force by the assailant. It also stems from the role of cameras and social media in many of these incidents, with the assailants recording their deeds and recirculating them through digital platforms. Such actions produce a body of evidence that calls greater attention to these crimes, although without necessarily leading to prosecution. At the same time, as Cressida Heyes argues, "that very evidence is the medium of a new kind of pornographic violence against the person."[52] Rape while unconscious entails a particular mode of violence, as she demonstrates—beyond the violation of bodily autonomy, also an infringement on "the deepest place of anonymity, the part of one's life when one's existence is most dangerously yet crucially suspended," Heyes writes.[53] The trauma of inescapable exposure that victims experience is "exaggerated and extended when that assault is recorded, and extended even further when a community of voyeurs is created around the images."[54] In some of these cases, the victims took their own lives.[55]

While for some viewers the unwieldly physicality embodied by Yozakura in the film's ending evokes exaggerated caricature or even physical comedy, the passage of time brings more disturbing implications to the forefront. In turning to real-life incidents, my aim is not to insist upon a purely documentary interpretation of a fictional scenario. Rather, it is to trace the particular resonance of the unconscious female body and to resume (from chapter 3) a discussion of the ambivalent legacy of the sleeping woman. In this figure, the vulnerability that comes with sleep is augmented by the perils of a misogynistic society, such that postures of rest become difficult to disentangle from effects of physical harm, and sleep becomes readily conflated with other unconscious states. Yozakura's mysterious condition has been variously described as a coma, blackout, or even death; no matter which,

it registers as a reduction to inert matter and "mere body." The sleeping woman marks the point at which the utopia of open-ended intimacy collapses back into the dystopia of gender, returning to a realization that, in the words of Iris Marion-Young, "an essential part of the situation of being a woman is that of living the ever-present possibility that one will be gazed upon as a mere body, as shape and flesh that presents itself as the potential object of another subject's intentions and manipulations, rather than as a living manifestation of action and intention."[56] If sleep can be defined as a requisite periodic retreat from self-directed agency into a place of anonymity, a vital remission from the exercise of action and intention, what does this imply for those whose access to agency and autonomy is already constrained?

In the examples of beautiful sleeping men discussed above, sleep is frequently situated in the ambit of injury, illness, and disability. For the sleeping woman, however, sexual violation can be added to this list of terms. The suggestion enters the scene even in the absence of explicit signs of violence or sex, as Ara Osterweil demonstrates in her analysis of Yoko Ono and John Lennon's 1970 film *Fly*. Like *Sleep*, *Fly* presents a series of views of a single unconscious nude figure—that of the actor Virginia Lust, who was not exactly sleeping but knocked out on heroin for the shoot. The film displays an "enthrallment with the corporeal part object" that recalls *Teem* and *Sleep*. It performs an up-close dissection of the body, from the "gentle folds and creases" of its surfaces to the tiny quivers attesting to "the seismic volition of cognizant flesh."[57] Guiding its exploration is a fly, a "consummate lover" who tenderly ministers to every inch of his sleeping giantess. But as the camera begins to pull back from the tight framing of body parts, the euphoric mood of polymorphous eroticism evaporates. With the transition to a wider view of Lust's body, on which multiple flies can now be seen crawling, Osterweil writes, we find ourselves confronted with "a crime scene."[58] While the flies connote filth and decay, the change of perspective is ultimately what precipitates this tonal shift: "It is the sight of the woman's entire body that initiates the sense of violation. When portrayed as an assortment of corporeal fragments—a body without organs—the body seemed safe from scopic violence. Yet as the focus of the film changes from part to whole object, hierarchies that had been suspended are re-implanted."[59] And so now, Lust "suddenly seems the victim of a sexual assault."[60]

What Osterweil terms the initiation of a sense of violation can also be described as the reactivation of a representational lineage. Lust's supine body evokes the iconography of the reclining nude in Western art, to which Osterweil alludes when she compares one of *Fly*'s shots to Gustave Courbet's 1866 painting *L'Origine du monde*.[61] But it also summons persistent visual constructions of the sleeping female nude as prey in a scenario of sexual violation. In contrast to the sleeping male nudes whose significance could range from melancholy to divine inspiration, the coding of the unconscious woman hews closely to notions of eroticism and passion.[62] One of the oldest tropes of the reclining nude, and a staple of

the "grand tradition of art," in Leo Steinberg's words, consists in the pairing of the sleeping nymph with "an alerted male."[63] These scenes weave together looking and longing, Steinberg writes, while also identifying the erotic appeal of the sleeper with her state of naked defenselessness. In the encounter between the "somnolent nymph" and the "lewd satyr" (or god or man; Steinberg illustrates his argument with an image of Jupiter discovering a sleeping Antiope), a "whole plot" takes shape and overdetermines the pictorial imagination of the dormant female nude. In these scenes, the asymmetrical pairing of the sleeper and watcher sets the stage for "the opportunity of the intruder" and, conversely, the rape of the sleeper.[64] The imaginary of the sleeping woman extends from the visual to the narrative realm. Thus, in European fairy tales, hibernating princesses are awakened by the act of giving birth after having been impregnated in their sleep. A more modern example comes from Yasunari Kawabata's 1961 novella "House of the Sleeping Beauties," which describes a brothel offering the experience of spending the night with a young woman who is guaranteed to "sleep on and know nothing at all."[65]

The very phrase "sleeping beauty" refers to more than just another beautiful sleeping body and reveals what is at stake in the fantasy of somnolent femininity. It is specifically in sleep that beauty emanates, in her nonwaking that she appeals to desire; for this figure, to be unconscious *is* to be desirable. While the broader cultural imagination of sleep endows it with a range of meanings and associations, in this instance, it hardens into a gendered trope of passivity. If the sense of violation always hovers close by the sleeping woman, it is because she already embodies a condition defined by complete availability. In *Fly*, Lust is tasked with enacting this state, performing unconsciousness while making her body available for use, by the flies and by the filmmakers. In Lust's role, Osterweil detects a parallel with Ono's own embodiment of extreme immobility and controlled passivity in her performance work *Cut Piece* (1964), which similarly "involves the viewer in troubling forms of violence directed against women's bodies."[66] Lust also calls to mind Yozakura from *The Wayward Cloud*, as another somnambulantly laboring woman. In contrast to the character with which this chapter began, Roong, who enjoys her sleep as a reprieve from her job and a spoil of reclaimed time, these figures are a reminder of the representational work extracted from the sleeping woman.[67]

PART II

SLEEPING REGARD

7

The Regressive Thesis

For Proust, nightly slumbers reawaken a dormant self from long ago. The drowsing narrator in the opening pages of *In Search of Lost Time*, although an adult man, finds himself delivered by sleep into the clutches of childhood fears that are now "for ever vanished . . . such as that my great-uncle would pull me by the curls, a terror dispelled on the day—the dawn for me of a new era—when they were cut off."[1] With this portrayal of sleep as a resurgence of bygone impulses and outgrown affects, Proust echoes a host of thinkers in the modern era who cast the nocturnal ritual of slumber as a temporary return to an earlier phase of life. An especially influential formulation comes from his contemporary Freud, who saw dreaming as a temporary relapse into "a primitive state of the psychical apparatus," a state in which the primary processes of infancy, "normally suppressed in the adult's waking life, come forcibly into their own again."[2] Dreaming, he emphasizes in his study of the phenomenon, "*is part of the—surmounted—childhood life of the psyche*."[3]

The path of this psychic reversion passes through sleep, itself defined by Freud as another mechanism of regression, the physiological and ontogenetic counterpart of dreaming. In *A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams*, he writes,

> We are not in the habit of devoting much thought to the fact that every night human beings lay aside the wrappings in which they have enveloped their skin, as well as anything which they may use as a supplement to their bodily organs . . . their spectacles, their false hair and teeth, and so on. We may add that when they go to sleep they carry out an entirely analogous undressing of their minds and lay aside most of their psychical acquisitions. Thus on both counts they approach remarkably close to the situation in which they began life. Somatically, sleep is a reactivation of intrauterine existence, fulfilling as it does the conditions of repose, warmth and exclusion of stimulus; indeed, in sleep many people resume the foetal posture. The psychical state of a sleeping person is characterized by an almost complete withdrawal from the surrounding world and a cessation of all interest in it.[4]

Preparing for rest, human beings enter into an unadorned, primeval state. Falling asleep, they return to an intrauterine condition characterized by warmth, darkness, repose, and the absence of external stimuli. Casting the act of sleep around the bedtime rituals of a highly prostheticized Western bourgeois subject, Freud portrays it as a periodic regression to an even deeper past than that associated with dreaming. As an expression of a recurrent flux in the psyche's ability to sustain its involvements with the external world, sleep is the return to a time before birth, resubmergence in a fetal state of nondifferentiation.

In this striking passage, Freud acknowledges the vital psychophysiological function of sleep as a periodic withdrawal necessary for survival. And in so doing, he breaks with a long-standing conception of sleep as a purely passive process, understood negatively as a cessation of conscious faculties. In contrast, he defines sleep in more assertive terms—as a deliberate withdrawal, an active wish on the part of the ego, and ultimately a state that brings its own "particular form of thinking," one instantiated in the activity of dreaming.[5] Ludwig Jekels argues that Freud thus anticipates the scientific consensus that would emerge several decades later around sleep as a highly active process and an integral complement to the waking state.[6] Jekels situates Freud's ideas about sleep at the juncture of the psychoanalytic study of dreams, inaugurated at the outset of the twentieth century, and the neurophysiological study of sleep, a field that comes into its own in the second half of the century. Modern sleep science approaches sleep as a distinct array of brain activity comprising not the mere interruption of wakefulness, but rather its partner within a complex circadian cycle.

At the same time, even as Freud's comments seem to point ahead to a new scientific paradigm that dislodges previous models of the relationship between sleeping and waking, they also reinscribe these older models to the extent that they posit sleep as a mode of reduced functioning in comparison to the waking state. By defining sleep in terms of periodic regression, Freud casts it as a subtraction from the effective functioning of the fully developed ego. As we fall asleep, there is a "relaxation of a certain deliberate (and no doubt also critical) activity which we allow to influence the course of our ideas while we are awake."[7] In this respect, he notes, sleep has much in common with other psychoneurotic states that involve "temporal regression," such as psychosis (which resembles dreaming in its hallucinatory wish fulfillment) and narcissism (suggested by the sleeper's lack of interest in the world).[8] Like these pathological states, it entails a suspension of the reality principle. For Freud, sleep amounts to a deviation from a norm identified with the fully awake, conscious, and mature mind.

At other moments, Freud considers the temporal flux of sleep in terms that are more ambiguous. Elsewhere he ruminates, "The world, it seems, does not possess even those of us who are adults completely, but only up to two thirds; one third of us is still quite unborn. Every time we wake in the morning it is like a new birth."[9] More than a momentary return to an earlier state, sleep is now conceived by him

as an existential break, by means of a metaphor of rebirth that jars the continuity of biological rhythms. Sleep raises the possibility that a part of the self as yet unborn dwells within the adult self like an alien presence, at times prevailing over it. The passage echoes, with curious precision, moments of *In Search of Lost Time* when Proust refers to another "being which had been reborn in me," an "extra-temporal being" who is released or reanimated by certain fortuitous smells, sounds, and visions.[10] Here Freud posits the idea of a being divided from itself in its existence in time, rather than cohering in a chronology of development. In raising a doubt about the extent to which we are fully in possession of our waking selves, Freud poses a question about sleep that is also a question about waking. At points like these, he gestures beyond the teleological linearity of regression toward a more open-ended conception of the relationship between sleeping and waking. Sleep, rather than presenting a temporary deviation from a norm of wide-awake consciousness, is linked to a more encompassing perspective that deposes this norm.

Jacques Lacan, in his reading of Freud, drives further along the trajectory suggested here to make a counterargument to the diagnosis of sleep as regression. For Lacan, Anne Carson observes, sleep is "a space from which the sleeper can travel in two directions, both of them a kind of waking."[11] Responding to *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Lacan challenges the premise that the illusion of dream and the reality of waking can be placed on opposite sides of a single divide. His reading extracts and makes explicit a key question that hangs over this text, of whether there isn't another reality besides the one to which we awaken. Lacan focuses on the central example discussed by Freud in the book's final chapter, a dream experienced by a man whose child has just died after several days of illness. Leaving the child's bedside, the man goes to sleep in an adjacent room and dreams of the child, who whispers to him reproachfully, "Father, don't you see I'm burning?" The father wakes up to discover that in the next room, a candle has fallen and burnt the dead child's arm. As the most painfully charged of the many anxiety dreams discussed in this text—a dream that has the effect of an alarm rather than the usual function of preserving the continuity of slumber—this example sits uneasily within Freud's theory of the dream as a fulfillment of wishes and desires.[12]

For Lacan, this dream serves as the basis for an alternative theory of dreaming, sleeping, and waking, one that relates to the idea of the real as trauma. The dream shows that consciousness is constituted around not only the encounter with external reality, but also a "psychical real." This psychical real takes the form of trauma in that it eludes us, being by definition unassimilable by consciousness; the encounter with this other reality is always a missed encounter, as he famously puts it. Lacan locates this missed reality inside the father's dream, enveloped in its traumatic core. What is it that rouses the father? Is it not something within the dream itself, contained in the fatal sentence spoken by the child, rather than what is happening in the adjacent room? "Is there not more reality in this message than in the noise by which the father also identifies the strange reality of what is happening

in the room next door?" Lacan asks.[13] The lesson of the father's dream is that "we cannot conceive the reality principle as having . . . the last word."[14] It is not enough to speak of awakening as a reassertion of the reality principle without considering also this other "reality that can no longer produce itself except by repeating itself endlessly, in some never attained awakening."[15] Hence the question he poses, and to which Carson refers: "How can we fail to see that awakening works in two directions," and not just one?[16] Lacan poses the endless repetition of the traumatic real as an interminable, incomplete process of waking into a reality to which one never fully arrives. "Even in absolute awakening," he says, "there is still an element of dream which is precisely the dream of awakening. We never wake up." For Lacan, one might say, "there is always a waking beyond our waking."[17]

These passages from Freud and Lacan represent instances in which psychoanalytic thought intertwines with philosophical speculations about sleep, with the two coming together around the question of whether we are ever completely awake. Lacan points to this shared orientation in an earlier seminar when, in the midst of a discussion of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he introduces a well-known Daoist parable from the Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi. After dreaming that he is a butterfly, Zhuangzi wakes up and wonders if he is not in fact a butterfly dreaming that he is Zhuangzi.[18] Apropos of Freud's text, Lacan responds, "Philosophers have always been concerned with this—Why isn't the experience one has in sleep just as important, as authentic, as that of the previous day? If he dreams every night that he is a butterfly, is it legitimate to say that he dreams he's a butterfly?"[19] The question (which Freud did not pursue, his primary concern instead being "what the dream means, what it means to someone, who is that someone?") persists in Lacan's subsequent conception of awakening as an always incomplete movement that can happen in more than one direction.[20] Much as Zhuangzi points to the illusoriness and ephemerality of what we take to be real, Lacan in this instance denies the reality principle the final word on awakening.

Zhuangzi's reflections on the dream might call to mind a well-known passage in *Meditations*, in which René Descartes writes,

> How often has it happened to me that in the night I dreamt that I found myself in this particular place, that I was dressed and seated near the fire, whilst in reality I was lying undressed in bed! At this moment it does indeed seem to me that it is with eyes awake that I am looking at this paper; that this head which I move is not asleep, that it is deliberately and of set purpose that I extend my hand and perceive it; what happens in sleep does not appear so clear nor so distinct as does all this. But in thinking over this I remind myself that on many occasions I have in sleep been deceived by similar illusions, and in dwelling carefully on this reflection I see so manifestly that there are no certain indications by which we may clearly distinguish wakefulness from sleep that I am lost in astonishment.[21]

For Descartes, however, the confusion between dream and reality indicates not the unstable nature of reality, but rather the fallibility of the senses that constitute

our only means of access to reality, and thus the threat of misapprehension that shadows—and ultimately deepens—the conscious subject's quest for certainty. In contrast to the Daoist parable, the guiding premise here is that there is in the first place an objective reality that can be—and must be—distinguished from illusion. The story of sleep told by Descartes therefore aligns with D.N. Rodowick's portrayal of the philosopher as "the founding author of the experience of modernity in its doubled aspect: presenting the self as divided from the world by its capacities for perception and thought, and thus wishing for the self to master both itself and the world, and all the objects in it, by assuring their existence through criteria of certain knowledge."[22] Deceived by the dream, lost in astonishment, the subject resolves to find its way back to ontological terra firma and, in so doing, reclaim a position of mastery.

The relegation of dreams to the category of illusion and the conflation of sleep with a state of deception meet a challenge in more contemporary philosophical approaches that interrogate the claims of the Cartesian subject. In these approaches, sleep commands particular interest as a window into those experiential realms—involuntary, unwilled, unconscious—that lie beyond the determining agency of the self-directed subject, frustrating its sovereignty and muddying "the transparency of the 'I think.'"[23] Zhuangzi's construal of the relationship between sleeping and waking as coequal and permeable is affirmed by a host of other Western thinkers besides Lacan who look both ways through the window between them. Among these thinkers are Proust, as discussed previously, who contrasts the plenitude of sleep with the "oblivion" imposed by our conscious faculties; Henri Bergson, who understands sleep as a continuation of sensing and thinking in an even more dynamic register, extending the field of perception and memory; and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who maintains that "the difference between perception and dream not being absolute, one is justified in counting them both among 'our experiences.'"[24] For them, the waking state is no longer privileged as a point of reference, basis of knowledge, and guarantor of certainty.

Merleau-Ponty troubles the division between sleeping and waking by emphasizing the reciprocal flows that render them pervious to each other. For instance, in *Phenomenology of Perception* he writes, "The sleeper is never completely isolated within himself, never totally a sleeper." There persists, even in the deepest slumber, that "anonymous alertness of the senses" as a link to the sensible world, a half-open door through which the sleeper can return.[25] By the same token, our waking interactions also bear the indelible imprint of the projections and imaginary qualities typically attributed to dreams. Considering sleep in the context of his Collège de France course "The Problem of Passivity," Merleau-Ponty observes, "Our waking relations with things and, above all, with others, have in principle an oneiric character: others are present to us as dreams, as myths, and that is enough to contest the cleavage between the real and the imaginary."[26] Thus, "there is an oneirism of wakefulness and, conversely, a quasi-perceptual character of dreams."[27]

But even as these modalities constantly "encroach upon one another," their relationship has been distorted by an overemphasis on their incommensurability—a distortion perpetuated by those philosophies that insist "sleeping consists in being absent from the true world or present to an imaginary world."[28]

Reading Merleau-Ponty, Claude Lefort argues that the phenomenological lessons of passivity can be distilled in a phrase that the philosopher invokes on multiple occasions: "It is not me who makes me think, no more than it is me who makes my heart beat."[29] In his most sustained engagements with the topic, Merleau-Ponty considers sleep in conjunction with a constellation of phenomena that exclude the exercise of decision or will, such as forgetting, involuntary memory, sexual desire, hysteria, and aphasia.[30] Comparing the last-named condition with sleep, for instance, he remarks that both originate "from a lower level than that of 'will.' . . . Neither symptom nor cure is worked out at the level of objective or positing consciousness, but below that level. Loss of voice as a situation may be compared to sleep."[31] Just as knowing the cause of their symptoms will offer no simple cure for the aphasic, so an informed understanding of the benefits of a good night's sleep will offer no reprieve for the sleepless—indeed to dwell on these benefits while trying to sleep is a surefire recipe for insomnia. One can await or lend oneself to sleep, but one "cannot cause sleep," says Merleau-Ponty; "the will to sleep prevents sleep . . . . I call upon sleep, but it is sleep which comes."[32] Sleep escapes the typical sense of doing in that it is actionable only in an inactive mode, and so he refers to it as a passive modality of being in the world. These passive modalities and behaviors are integral elements of a consciousness that cannot be reduced to the capacities of self-reflection and self-directing activity: "Sleep and the unconscious [are] to be understood not as degradations of consciousness by the absurd mechanism of the body—invasion of the third person into the first—but as internal possibility of what we call consciousness."[33] They are therefore crucial for an apprehension of one's relation to and orientation toward the world, in all of the modalities of this orientation—encompassing the entire human being, taking into account those layers that subsist below the subject's self-awareness, and extending to an existence that is recessed, "anonymous," and "passive."[34] If sleep confronts us with a realization of our passivity, as a reminder of the limits of volitional agency, it also returns us to a recognition of the inescapability of embodiment.

Reflecting on the questions raised by sleep, Merleau-Ponty enters into some of his closest dialogues with Freudian theories of the unconscious. The view of sleep that emerges across the intersecting discourses of philosophy and psychoanalysis acknowledges the persistent uncertainties it brings in its wake—uncertainties concerning subjectivity, the coherence of the self, and the nature of our connection to reality. Such a view, however, has been overshadowed by the thesis of sleep as regression. For the associations among sleep, regression, and psychopathology forged by Freud would persist in the percolations of psychoanalysis throughout the twentieth century. These associations become entrenched by the writings of a

subsequent generation of analysts who build upon Freud's framework to explore the connections between sleep and psychoneurotic states such as schizophrenia and hysteria.[35] The regressive thesis of sleep harbors a suspicion that it inevitably entails not just a momentary subsiding of alert consciousness, but also an undoing of the lessons of reality testing, a compromising of hard-won reason (those "psychical acquisitions" that one lays aside for sleep), and a potentially dangerous undermining of "sovereignty over the realm of thought."[36] It is hardly coincidental that throughout *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud maps the effects of sleep onto a series of security metaphors, describing a fraught nocturnal drama of careless night watchmen, psychic citadels exposed to vulnerability, and alarmed awakenings.[37] The regressive thesis reinstates and reinforces a subtractive understanding of sleep, now defined as a state of lowered consciousness. It shares in and hardens the somnophobic disposition that has reigned throughout the modern era.

The following chapters take up the regressive thesis in the domain of cinema reception, constructing a broad historical perspective on the ways that sleep, for better or worse, has been singled out as an inextricable element of the filmgoing experience. I synthesize a host of theories of spectatorship and reception from the classical period to the contemporary in order to trace an enduring perceived affinity between sleeping and watching movies. Various writers throughout the twentieth century, in contending with the conditions of theatrical film exhibition and the resulting state of attention that the medium seems uniquely capable of eliciting from its audience, have pointed to cinema's sedative effects. For them, an artificial somnolence is born of the "artificial darkness" of the movie theater and the isolated luminosity of the screen.[38] On the one hand, many have regarded this effect in a manner consistent with the denigration of sleep in the modern era. For them, the artificial somnolence induced by the cinema attests to its power to involve the audience to such a degree that they lose sight of everything else. It signals an absorption to the point of a total surrender of the senses and relinquishment of any sense of reality, consistent with Freud's definition of sleep as the disabling of a crucial "function of orientating the individual in the world by discrimination between what is internal and what is external."[39] The audience, like the person who sleep and dreams, does not merely behold a spectacle but rather is submerged within it, undergoing all that this suggests about losing one's bearings, passing into an altered state, and vanishing into an elsewhere. Such responses demonstrate that the coding of sleep as a regressive process disarming the conscious subject and diminishing their mental powers leaves a deep imprint upon a broader array of disciplines engaged with Freudian models of the psyche and unconscious. The regressive thesis gains particular traction in the domain of psychoanalytic film theory, harnessed to a critique of cinema's illusionistic and ideological sway.[40]

On the other hand, however, the sedative effects of filmgoing need not automatically call for the corrective of a more critically awakened viewing practice, one that reinstates the transparency of the "I think" against the murky scene of

cinema and restores the light of reason. To move beyond a thesis that restricts sleep to a foreclosure of the functions of waking thought is to attune to the positive role that sleep can play in spectatorship, as a generative difference and not a mere detraction. Following my discussion of the regressive thesis of sleep within discourses on spectatorship, I chart an alternative itinerary that sheds this theoretical legacy in order to compose a different account of reception as it extends into the twilight zones of consciousness. If the darkened theater is a setting where it is easy to lose an orientation to reality, it is also a place where other things are found, rushing in on currents of thought and feeling that are released by the lowering of consciousness. The drowsy disorientation that overcomes the audience inside the theater gives rise to pleasurable and peculiar turns of reflection (recalling Jacqueline Risset), to multiplied pathways and directionalities of response that cannot be subsumed within the linearity of regression. Somnolence, rather than cutting off all exit routes from the film's illusion, creates lines of flight that take off from the projected image in new directions. In giving oneself over to the submersive force of sleep, the filmgoer inhabits a particular disposition in relation to their own body, a place, and the other bodies in it. Sleepy spectatorship can bring into play ways of experiencing films—and other kinds of art and media—that are no less involving, affecting, or memorable for their lack of vigilant focus. Movie theaters, along with other sites of reception, are places where sleep can be brought into conversation with waking life, where the borders and edges between these states can be activated.

Such claims fly in the face of not only theoretical truisms, but also the commonsense meanings of seeing and watching. Yet they find support from illustrious company. For instance, Martje Grohmann, describing her memories of watching films alongside the archivist and film critic Lotte Eisner, recalled that "if it was a good film," Eisner "would watch attentively for some time and then contentedly fall asleep. Toward the end, she would wake up with a start and be ready with her comment: 'A very interesting film.' Inevitably she was right."[41] Eisner's viewing habits were shared by the German critic Michel Althen, for whom "to fall asleep in the cinema means to trust the film."[42] The French cinema legend and artist Agnès Varda's predilection for napping in public has been amply documented by social media. Reflecting on a visit to the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna late in her life, she described sitting in front of a painting by Vermeer: "I felt so good that I fell asleep . . . . The feeling of peace and happiness had been so strong that I wanted to sleep there. So maybe we will find people sleeping in front of my work."[43] The Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami expressed his preference for "the films that put their audience to sleep in the theater. I think those films are kind enough to allow you a nice nap . . . . Some films have made me doze off in the theater, but the same films have made me stay up at night, wake up thinking about them in the morning, and keep on thinking about them for weeks."[44] For the filmmaker and theorist Raúl Ruiz, "the point where we spectators begin to fall asleep, really or metaphorically;

the point where we begin to lose the thread of the story, and yet do not feel ready to leave the room for disinterest" is critical, for it is only then that "we can finally say that we are in the film."[45] And as I will show in greater detail, in Apichatpong we encounter a practitioner who, as well as validating sleeping as a spectatorial response, pursues it in a systematic and structural mode.

The alternative itinerary of narcotic reception traced below takes shape through a close dialogue with Apichatpong's work (including *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*) along with that of other artists and thinkers from different places and periods. What they share is an approach to sleep not as a dead end but rather as a starting point for an expansive model of reception, one that takes into account the ragged edges of consciousness, the ebbs and flows of attention, and even those spans of complete perceptual disconnection that can break up the act of viewing. Such modes of distraction, involuntary deviation, and self-absence are more often than not a part of the viewing process, within the theater and elsewhere; zoning out and nodding off can be cinematic experiences in their own right, as these commentators allow. Yet they have been neglected in histories of reception and overshadowed by prescriptive models of spectatorial attention. To admit sleep into the experience of cinema is to contend with the ways the latter is rippled by perceptual flux and bodily rhythms, along with the question of exactly when and where this experience begins and ends (as Kiarostami's comments suggest). The unraveling effects of somnolence can be situated on a continuum alongside a host of corporeal, involuntary, and affective responses that unfold below the threshold of cognitive awareness and self-control. Thus, a consideration of sleepy spectatorship intersects both with avant-garde provocations of the past—such as the Surrealist yearning for "a critical point as captivating and imperceptible as that uniting waking and sleeping"—and with contemporary phenomenological and affect-based approaches to reception.[46] Sleep brings into play an open-ended and permeable conception of spectatorial response that, on the one hand, reframes cinema's history of theatrical exhibition and, on the other hand, meets the challenge of the ongoing relocations and mutations that make an open question of what cinema is and how it is experienced. It answers to a need to rethink and revise our sense of what it means to engage with works and to be a part of an audience.

Finally, to seriously consider the proposition of a dozing viewer is to confront a phantom that has persistently haunted theories of cinema—the passive spectator. The discourse of narcotic spectatorship can be framed within an iterative endeavor to pin down and exorcise this phantom. Even as the study of the reception of moving images has undergone continuous development, expansion, and refinement—building on archival excavations, methodological innovations, theoretical repositionings—it has also been hard-pressed to move past and divest from the problem of passivity, constantly resurrecting the phantom in order to banish it anew. As Abraham Geil observes, even as critical approaches to spectatorship have proliferated—drawing from psychoanalysis, cultural studies, empirical audience studies,

cognitivism, and phenomenology—they converge around a timeworn opposition between a passivity always coded in negative terms and the positive ideal of an active spectator. The breakthrough of a new perspective tends to be staked upon the discovery of an "active particularity," which is differentiated from the background of a generalized passivity. Thus, "whatever else spectators are taken to be, they must in the first instance be understood as *active* agents in their own spectatorship," Geil argues, even as the criteria for determining such agency undergo dispute and revision.[47]

In this respect, cinema inherits from the theater what Jacques Rancière calls the "paradox" of the passive spectator—a spectator who, while needed for the performance to be a performance, is imagined to be "separated from both the capacity to know and the power to act," and who therefore must be remade into an active participant.[48] Film theory, like modern theater, continually rediscovers and reaffirms its mandate in the project of transforming passivity into activity. This mandate holds firm even as moving-image exhibition assumes new forms and enters a plurality of sites. The opposition between activity and passivity grows ever more indelible as it is mapped across viewing locales, reinvested as a means of anchoring and containing the drift of spectatorship across public and private spaces, large and small screens, mobile and immobile platforms. Some attempts have been made to overcome this paradox by redefining passivity as an aspect of spectatorship to be embraced rather than overcome. For instance, Martin Seel argues that in the cinema "we come closest to fulfilling our desire to not have to determine our situation but to *let* ourselves be determined by it. Film grants us the special enjoyments and sufferings of passivity."[49] Nonetheless, this recuperation reaches its limit at the point of sleep: "this state of being captured by film, however, does not come about automatically. After all, cinema is not a sleeping chamber in which we merely follow our own dreams (although that sometimes can be a pleasure in its own right). It surely is necessary that we be awake, aware, and attentive."[50] For the enjoyments of passivity to be redeemed, sleep must be refused. An ideal of spectatorship that places a premium on the active command of the senses and reflexive awareness as the keys to autonomous judgment and critical agency proves its durability. To trace the discourses of spectatorship is to be drawn into a process of interminable awakening, a perpetual program of subjective reconditioning toward this participatory aspiration.

The discussion that follows makes no claim to dispatch with the problem of passivity once and for all by way of a final exorcism. Its objective is to rescue the sleepy spectator from these interminable awakenings, to emancipate them from a recuperative logic that insists upon critical vigilance as its highest priority. For Rancière, the project of emancipating spectatorship levels the hierarchy of activity over passivity and dissolves the ties that bind these terms to preconceived notions of "capacity and incapacity."[51] In the absence of this structuring polarity, it becomes possible to approach the question of spectatorship without prejudice or

preconceptions, allowing that, in the words of Merleau-Ponty, “there is passivity right there in activity . . . activity right there in passivity.”[52] The ground is prepared for an inquiry into the active processes underlying the appearance of inaction; to discern the specific forms of feeling, thought, and transmission involved in the most seemingly passive postures; and to recognize the potential of simply letting go and zoning out. The somnolent spectator is also an emancipated spectator; the release of sleep delivers them to, as Apichatpong puts it, “another kind of freedom.”[53]

8

Narcotic Reception

The 2012 film *Holy Motors* begins with a title sequence that incorporates the chronophotographic motion studies conducted by Étienne-Jules Marey and Georges Demenÿ during the nineteenth century. In brief scenes that alternate with the credit titles, we glimpse cell-like spaces with gridded floors, in which nude bodies perform the basic physical actions of running, jumping, and throwing. In one of these scenes, lasting no more than two seconds, a boy propels his body upward in a leap. Following this is an equally brief fragment of footage, repeated three times in a loop, in which an adult man steps forward and vigorously tosses an object to the ground.[1] The deteriorated condition of these black-and-white images and the jerkiness of their motion situate them in an era of visual media far removed from our own. The final image shown in the credit sequence, however, shifts the time frame to a more proximate period, one whose receding the film's contemporary viewer is poised to witness. It is a color image of a mass of people who appear to be asleep while seated upright in uniform rows inside a dim, cavernous space. Given the perfect stasis of these dormant figures, it is at first unclear whether this is a filmic image or a photographic freeze-frame. Gradually, however, it becomes legible as a moving image of an unmoving, unconscious cinema audience. The reflected light from the screen washes over them, briefly exposing the red cushioning of their seats. The sounds that echo in this dim space—traffic, footsteps, a man's voice shouting "No!," a gunshot, a foghorn—emanate from the film that, although not visible in the shot, plays before them.

The juxtaposition of these scenes in the film's opening moments constructs a historical framework in which to make sense of *Holy Motors* as a work that reflects on cinema from various angles: as a technology of capture, a medium of performance, a cultural rite, and a repository of shared memories. In referencing the work of Marey and Demenÿ, the film gestures to the beginnings of moving-image technology in serial photography, which breaks down movement as a series of still photos that can be reconstituted in projection. In the image of the film



FIGURE 50. *Holy Motors* (Leos Carax, 2012).

theater—appearing as a sort of reverse shot to the prior views of the photographed body in motion—the grand scale, seating arrangement, and full-capacity crowd call to mind the burgeoning of motion pictures as a medium of mass entertainment. The image thus sounds a note of nostalgia, one that finds an echo in other twenty-first-century films that look back to a golden age of filmgoing that seems lost to the present—such as Tsai Ming-liang's 2003 film *Goodbye Dragon Inn*, which similarly begins inside a crowded movie theater that looms like an apparition from the past.[2] As Dan Morgan argues, "Cinema is remembered here [in *Holy Motors*] as an institution in which the appearance of projected film on screen was enough to guarantee an audience, in which picture palaces allowed a gathering of a semi-anonymous public that would lose itself in the images, and in which the appeals of cinema were woven into the popularity of its forms."[3]

If *Holy Motors* aims to resurrect those appeals—in another era and by other means—this particular visualization of the memory of what cinema used to be also injects the film's endeavor with a certain ambivalence. A sense of uncanniness undercuts the warm glow of nostalgic retrospection. The energetic actions of the individual performing bodies form a striking contrast to the completely motionless ones inside the movie theater. The flickering, jittery quality of the older footage further animates these images, suggesting an uncontainable energy that struggles to burst forth from within and shatter the photographic stillness of the individual frame. In the image of the film audience, however, it is as if the intervening refinements of film's technology and industrial infrastructure have returned us to a condition of nearly photographic stasis and perhaps even an atrophy more profound. *Holy Motors* begins with a distant beginning, the body onscreen convulsed in movement and twitching with irrepressible animation, in order to arrive

at, on the other side of the fourth wall, an audience wholly given over to inertia, for whom the darkness of the theater seems to be an irresistible invitation to oblivion. Crossing over from the image onscreen to the space of the theater, we encounter unresponsive bodies that seem to be the negative reflection of the active bodies onscreen. What is remembered here, and what can be made of this strange picture of the semi-anonymous filmgoing public as a collective of sleepers?

On the one hand, we might call it an image of relaxation and reverie, reading through the reactions of those who have celebrated the movie theater as a place of welcome release from the constraints and responsibilities of waking life, fostering a newfound intimacy with one's semiconscious existence. Perhaps this is the movie audience held in that "critical point as captivating and imperceptible as that uniting waking and sleeping," to recall André Breton's resonant statement of Surrealist cinephilia.[4] The Surrealist poet Robert Desnos writes about the movie theater in analogous terms: "There we were at home. Its darkness was like that of our bedrooms before going to sleep. The screen perhaps might be the equal of our dreams."[5] Several decades later, Roland Barthes would also describe the theater as an enclosure that holds out the promise of ease and laxity to its occupants: "How many spectators slip into their seats as if into a bed, coats or feet flung over the row in front of them."[6] *Holy Motors* corroborates their identification of a parallel between the cinema theater and the bedroom as a place for dreaming: the film's title appears over the shot of the sleeping audience, which is followed immediately by a cut to an image of a man in pajamas asleep on a bed in a dimly lit room. The character introduced here is another figure who evokes a memory of cinema's past, recalling the sleepers of early cinema who awaken to uncertain realities.

On cue the man—played by the film's director, Leos Carax—awakens with a start and turns on a light. He explores the unfamiliar hotel room in which he finds himself and chances upon a secret door camouflaged by the wallpaper. The door opens onto a hallway that leads him to a picture palace, where he discovers the audience of the previous scene, still absorbed in its comatose state. Reencountered through the itinerary of this figure, the scene begins to pulse with other intimations. Its cavernous gloom appears more sinister, and the deathliness of the unresponsive bodies contained in it, already somewhat apparent in the initial shot, becomes even more so through the eyes of this bystander. On the other hand, then, the film's depiction of the cinema audience can be read through the lens of discourses relating the figure of the sleeping spectator to more insidious forms of insensibility. Consider, for instance, an essay published in 1911 by the writer Jules Romains on "The Crowd at the Cinematograph": "The group dream now begins. They sleep; their eyes no longer see. They are no longer conscious of their bodies. Instead there are only passing images, a gliding and rustling of dreams. They no longer realize they are in a large square chamber, immobile, in parallel rows as in a ploughed field."[7] In Romains's depiction of the audience as unseeing and unaware, what emerges are the more troubling implications of the cinema's captivating

force, shadowing the pleasurable reveries that it unleashes for its viewers. Both of these dimensions are at play in Romains's account. He locates another order of experience just beyond the facade of their slumbering stasis, one that is oneiric, kinetic, and alive with possibilities of transformation and even "resurrection." "And while their bodies slumber and their muscles relax and slacken in the depths of their seats, they pursue burglars across the rooftops, cheer the passing of a king from the East, or march into a wide plain with bayonets or bugles," he writes.[8] For Romains, sleep is ambiguous in its effects, a force of both stupefaction and resurrection, much as the cinema can simultaneously lull and galvanize its audience.

Another consideration of the somnolent audience comes from the theorist Jean Comolli in an essay from 1966. While Romains offers the merest suggestion of the deindividualization of the movie audience, whom he describes as fixed "in parallel rows as in a ploughed field," Comolli takes this suggestion to a more extreme conclusion. For him, the conditions of theatrical film exhibition lead directly to the regrettable "repetition, sameness and conformity" of the entire system of commercial cinema. He holds to account the darkness of the movie theater and the "half-sleeping state" induced in the filmgoer for the shortcomings of cinema.[9] In entering "a darkness close to that of the bedroom," the viewer is primed to expect and experience "a series of standardized emotions," he writes.[10] "Conditioning to darkness activates to full effect a kind of unthinking reflex in the spectator entering a cinema—expectation, desire even, for familiar forms, recognized patterns, the whole homogenized apparatus."[11] Comolli construes darkness as an impediment to the clarity of vision and "lucid participation" that might lead the audience beyond its state of complacency and provoke a demand for more from its movies.[12] Thus, darkness extinguishes more than merely sight, while the onset of sleep brings about a pacification of the ability to discriminate, leading to the unification of the audience around a lowest common denominator of judgment.

Through these writings, we can begin to grasp the deep theoretical resonance of the prelude of *Holy Motors*, which condenses a history of cinema by visualizing an equation between sleeping and filmgoing. The works cited above represent but a small sampling from a voluminous discourse about all the ways in which filmgoing involves passing into a special zone of influence, an altered state of mind, and a different mode of consciousness. Considering cinema reception, numerous filmmakers, critics, and writers have picked up on an insight commonly attributed to Richard Wagner—that the design of exhibitionary space can affect the consciousness of the audience.[13] For instance, echoing Comolli's claims in an article published in the same year, the artist Robert Smithson writes, "Even more of a mental conditioner than the movies, is the actual movie house . . . . The physical confinement of the dark box-like room indirectly conditions the mind."[14] Resuming this line of thought in "A Cinematic Atopia," Smithson imagines the film viewer as a hermit dwelling in a cave—"impassive, mute, still," and "a captive of sloth."[15] His description applies not only to the filmgoer's body but also to their senses, which

likewise succumb to the drag of torpor. Perception assumes “a kind of sluggishness,” and a state of “dozing consciousness” sets in. This moviegoer might very well fall asleep, Smithson notes, and it wouldn’t even matter.[16]

For other observers, too, the process of falling asleep—attended by a sense of winding down, going under, and blurring out—aptly captures the way cinema modifies the psychophysiological functioning of its audience to bring about a state of lowered consciousness. This affinity with sleep seems to set cinema apart from other popular entertainments. The curator and critic Iris Barry, for example, contrasts film to drama: “To go to the pictures is to purchase a dream. To go to the theatre is to buy an experience . . . . We come out of the pictures soothed and drugged like sleepers wakened, having half-forgotten our own existence, hardly knowing our own names. The theatre is a tonic, the cinema a sedative.”[17] The darkness of the theater, which limits the scope of sensory perception; the brightness of the screen, which dominates the visual field; and seating configured to, in the words of Jocelyn Szczepaniak-Gillece, maintain a “cradled spectator,” together conspire to subdue the audience.[18] Filmgoing and sleeping converge at the point of a decidedly passive receptivity, the result of the slackening of degrees of both physical and mental exertion. Thus, observing her fellow audience members, Olivia Howard Dunbar asks, “Are these pleasure-seekers resolutely disguising their enjoyment? Or are they as they appear to be, half asleep?”[19] The cinema experience has repeatedly been equated with a kind of half sleep, a “*minimum of sleep*,” or a “sleep in miniature.”[20]

At many points during the period of theatrical exhibition as a prevalent commercial norm, film spectatorship was compared with sleeping, and the soporific inducements of cinema related to modes of reception that range from reduced perceptual processing to cognitive incapacitation to wholesale phantasmatic regression. Woven throughout the history of cinema is a discourse of narcotic reception that expounds upon the sedative effects of filmgoing in contrast to an implicit ideal of alert self-possession and autonomous judgment. This discourse of narcotic reception threads across diverse historical and cultural contexts, advanced by manifold voices and from varying perspectives in the domains of aesthetic debate, psychology, social reform, journalism, as well as film theory proper. It is divided between, on the one hand, an investment in the transformative or liberatory possibilities of the filmgoer’s reveries (as in the case of the Surrealists) and, on the other hand, a phobic distrust of the medium’s sway over its audience. If the condition induced in the filmgoer shares in the reduced critical functioning that defines sleeping and dreaming, it also overlaps with other states that conform to this definition, such as hypnosis (commonly understood as a kind of partial sleep or somnambulism), opiation (as a somnolence induced by intoxication), and anaesthetization.[21] The bonding of sleep with regression places it on a continuum with these other modalities of diminished discernment and deactivated volition; as in screen portrayals of somnolence, sleep cannot be disentangled from adjacent

forms of insensibility. The idea of artificially induced sleep that is synonymous with narcosis extends the latter's reach as an overarching metaphor for film as an experience that the viewer does not fully control.

Siegfried Kracauer refers successively to these different facets of narcosis in *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, where he compares the influence that film exerts over its viewer to the effects of mesmerism, intoxicants, and the onset of sleep. The moviegoer becomes "spellbound by the luminous rectangle before his eyes—which resembles the glittering object in the hand of a hypnotist," he writes. Like a "hypnotized person," they lose control over their thoughts and succumb to the "suggestions" fed to them by the film. It is for this reason, he goes on, that film is "an incomparable instrument of propaganda."[22] Elsewhere in the same text, he turns from the rectangle of light to the darkness that surrounds it: "Darkness automatically reduces our contacts with reality, depriving us of many environmental data needed for adequate judgements and other mental activities. It lulls the mind."[23] The effect of this sensory deprivation is to suspend volitional thought. Perhaps the attraction of cinema consists precisely in this pacification of mental agency and effort, in this lulling descent into "a state between waking and sleeping."[24] Thus, Kracauer situates the medium on a spectrum that is continuous with sedation and stupor, in a liminal zone suggested by the double meaning of narcosis as both getting high and falling into unconsciousness. "Doping creates dope addicts. It would seem a sound proposition that the cinema has its habitués who frequent it out of an all but physiological urge. They are not prompted by a desire to look at a specific film or to be pleasantly entertained; what they really crave is for once to be released from the grip of consciousness, lose their identity in the dark."[25]

In the course of tracing the effects of cinema's narcosis, Kracauer shifts his attention from the restraints imposed upon the audience's discerning capacities to the intensification of its response. For as cinema's drug-like powers set in, the very sense of a self begins to unravel: "with the moviegoer, the self as the mainspring of thoughts and decisions relinquishes its power of control."[26] And when in this manner "the conscious personality begins to disintegrate," a condition of porosity ensues, drawing the moviegoer into a heightened state of receptiveness to the image and the material world it presents. He cites the words of an acquaintance who tells him, "In the theater I am always I, but in the cinema I dissolve into all things and beings."[27] Losing her identity in the dark, this acquaintance simultaneously discovers a state of radical impressionability and receptivity, one that originates in the "visceral faculties" rather than in the "power of reasoning," rippling outward toward the physical world.[28] Contemplating this transformation, Kracauer describes a kind of cinematic absorption that is different from the usual sense of enthrallment by the imaginary. "Released from the control of consciousness, the spectator cannot help feeling attracted by the phenomena in front of him. They beckon him to come nearer . . . . So he drifts toward and into the objects."[29]

This absorption is defined by an enlarged capacity for identification—to an extreme degree, without discrimination, and breaking through the constraints of habitual perception. The narcotized spectator is poised somewhere in between complete immersion and total dissociation, he writes, "wavering between self-absorption and self-abandonment."[30]

Recall that for Merleau-Ponty, investigations of sleep and other passive modalities of experience "must make us acquainted with a genus of being with regard to which the subject is not sovereign, without the subject being inserted in it."[31] Probing the artificial somnolence of cinema, Kracauer arrives at a conception of spectatorship as an experience with no I behind it. For him, as Miriam Hansen has pointed out, "the film experience undercuts the still revenant ideology of the sovereign, self-identical subject."[32] To the extent that this sedated spectator can even be described as a subject at all, it is a self-alienated and "curious" one—as Johannes von Moltke writes, a subject "that yields its autonomy and sovereignty and gains a new openness and receptivity in turn."[33] This curious subject occupies a specific place in history, both Hansen and von Moltke note, a product of the postwar, postcrisis moment in which Kracauer completed *Theory of Film*.[34] But it was incubated in the movie houses of an earlier period. Kracauer cites an essay written by the French critic Michel Dard during the peak of the silent era, in which Dard detects the birth of a new sensibility in a young generation of cinephiles. Dard observes the movie addicts who, leaving one theater and on their way to another, walk the streets with "gazes lost or fixed on who knows what," in a stupor so deep and mysterious that they seem to still be cloaked in the darkness from which they've just emerged, wrapped in a "night in which their eyes and their spirits have swum away, leaving them behind."[35] He continues, "Never, in effect, has one seen in France a sensibility of this kind: passive, personal, as little humanistic or humanitarian as possible; diffuse, unorganized, and unconscious like an amoeba; deprived of an object or rather, attached to all [of them] like fog, [and] penetrant like rain; heavy to bear, easy to satisfy, impossible to restrain."[36]

These barely sentient creatures are likely whom Kracauer has in mind when he postulates that what the habitué of cinema ultimately craves is not to be entertained but "to be released from the grip of consciousness, lose their identity in the dark." In this ameboid figure, we find an extreme embodiment of the passive spectator, who "will do nothing but receive the image," as Dard writes, indiscriminately storing up impressions to who knows what end. The dawning age of cinephilia is conveyed in an oddly inscrutable—and more than a little disconcerting—portrait of an army of sleepwalkers, film junkies who want nothing more than to go back under. Nonetheless, to reawaken or rehabilitate these sleepwalkers is not the goal of these thinkers. Dard sees in these dissolute filmgoers new possibilities of identification that level the distinction between subject and object, making them into the "brothers of poisonous plants and pebbles."[37] Similarly, Kracauer imagines the spectator as a receiving vessel, attuned to a secret, indeterminate

murmur—"the murmur of existence"—that would otherwise go unheard, and drawn toward the brink of some "unattainable goal" that he does not name.[38]

Kracauer suspends moral judgment when he considers the ways that cinema lulls the mind. In the writings of other commentators of his time, however, similar observations precipitate a reaction of moral panic. The psychologist Robert Gaupp writes, "The darkened room, the monotonous sound, the forcefulness of exciting scenes following each other beat by beat lull every critical faculty to sleep in impressionable souls, and thus, not infrequently the content of the drama becomes a fateful suggestion for the complaisant youthful mind. We know that *all suggestions adhere more strongly when the critical faculties sleep*."[39] For Gaupp, movies are the cause of a crisis of attention and character, tendering further stupefaction to minds already fatigued and acquiescent. Irrespective of the differences in these accounts of cinematic narcosis, they share in a conception of sedation that links the relaxation of the body to an unwinding of mental capacities. Beginning in the same place, with the enclosure of darkness and settling into stasis that pave the way for a somnolent descent, they arrive at the endpoint of an evacuation of the filmgoer's senses, mind, and will. If the cinema's sedative effect results in an unusually heightened state of receptivity or impressionability, this state is interpreted as an indication of the audience's loss of acuity and resistance. Cinema operates as an instrument of mass hypnosis, and this hypnosis, in Raymond Bellour's words, works upon "the child who sleeps in every spectator."[40] To the extent that sleep plays a role here, then, it is a role formed in the shadow of the regression thesis—within a larger dynamic of possession and dispossession, part of an escalating susceptibility to external powers of suggestion.

It is in another set of debates, however, where the impact of Freud's regressive thesis is most clearly evident. The discussions of cinema that gained momentum in the 1970s, quickened by the currents of poststructuralist theory, produced new conceptual models for the filmgoing experience. Drawing on the resources of psychoanalysis and Althusserian ideology critique, these models elaborated the filmic experience in terms of spectatorial positioning and a technologically mediated subject effect: as much as films play for an audience, they produce the spectator as a subject position, by activating, binding, and directing the vision and desire of their viewers. Such accounts of spectatorship often describe scenes of regression that play out within the movie theater, with the encounter between audience and screen image modeled on some form of return to an earlier stage of psychic development. For example, in drawing what would become a highly influential analogy of the screen to a mirror, Christian Metz invokes the scenario of the mirror stage set forth by Lacan, in which the child (mis)recognizes and identifies with its image. During the screening, writes Metz, we are "like the child, in a sub-motor and hyper-perceptive state . . . like the child again, we are prey to the imaginary, the double."[41] The notion that there is something fundamentally regressive about

cinematic spectatorship, rendering the pleasures of movie watching suspect, is a constant refrain in the theoretical debates of this period.

A particularly rigorous formulation of this idea comes from two papers published in 1975 in a special issue of the journal *Communications* on "Psychoanalysis and Cinema" that not only launched the psychoanalytic turn in film theory, but also gave rise to a reconceptualization of ideology as, in the words of Rodowick, "a special kind of practice" producing "an almost inescapable regime of sight and power."[42] (The cover of the journal issue appropriately includes an image of Cesare, the somnambulist from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.) "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality," by Jean-Louis Baudry, and "The Fiction Film and Its Spectator: A Metapsychological Study," by Metz, delineate the mechanisms of cinematic regression by means of a close dialogue with Freud.[43] The titles give a clue to the focus of their analysis. In their respective papers, and in dialogue with one another, Baudry and Metz offer a new take on a familiar metaphor—of film as like a dream—by way of a rigorous theorization of the dream metaphor rooted in Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*. At the same time, both authors reanimate and retheorize the discourse of narcotic reception by way of a sustained engagement with that book's seventh and final chapter. Baudry and Metz theorize film spectatorship as "a special regime of perception" and explicate it as such in the terms laid out by Freud.[44] The metapsychological perspective adopted by Freud in this chapter (and resumed in his follow-up paper *A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams*) is crucial to their arguments, serving as a bridge that connects the scene of the dream to the scene of filmic projection, as parallel loci where this special regime of perception may be activated. Just as Freud returns in this chapter to the matter of sleep as the "economic condition" that makes dreaming possible by bringing about a series of modifications in the psychical system that disarm its wakeful functions, so Baudry and Metz look to sleep in order to explain how an impression of reality comes to dominate the filmgoer's perception. In composing a metapsychology of the film spectator, they pose a question of cinematic fiction "in relation to waking and sleep."[45]

"The Apparatus" and "The Fiction Film and Its Spectator" have in common a focus on the space of the movie theater and the environmental conditions of film exhibition (as opposed to the image, the frame, or the camera), positing these as key conditioning factors that induce an attitude of naïve credulity on the part of the filmgoer.[46] With this focus, the two essays intercept and extend earlier discussions that identify cinematic reception with narcotic effects. Baudry singles out the darkness of the theater and the immobilization of the viewer in their seat. These features of exhibitionary space replicate the scenario of the cave in Plato's parable, as he argues with his by-now notorious comparison between the audience of movies and the prisoners in the cave, both caught in a "state of confusion" that "makes them take images and shadows for the real." But immobility in darkness "was not invented by Plato," Baudry notes. Rather, as Freud reminds us, it can also refer to

"the forced immobility of the sleeper who we know repeats the postnatal state and even intrauterine existence; but this is also the immobility that the visitor to the dim space rediscovers, leaning back into his chair."[47] The movie theater is affiliated with a series of spaces—cave, chamber, bedroom, womb—that all share the attributes of inhibiting motor response and cutting off direct contact with external reality. Deprived of such response and contact, the filmgoer occupies a position like that of the sleeper for whom, according to Freud, "the possibility of reality-testing is abandoned," perception being closed to the outside.[48] For the person who sleeps and dreams, "the perception originates within the subject's own body; it is not real," although the dreamer cannot know this at the time.[49] Likewise, the film spectator can easily fall prey to an impression of reality. By restaging the conditions that "make it possible for dream to pass itself off for reality to the dreamer," Baudry writes, the cinematic apparatus reproduces the sleeping psyche.[50] The film therefore shares in the characteristics of the dream "in that *it offers the subject perceptions 'of a reality' whose status seems similar to that of representations experienced as perception*."[51]

In "The Fiction Film and Its Spectator," Metz also describes the spectatorial experience in terms of a transition from wakeful consciousness to a hazier state, a transition that begins when the filmgoer enters the theater and takes a seat. "In contrast to the ordinary activities of life, the filmic state as induced by traditional fiction films . . . is marked by a general tendency to lower wakefulness, to take a step in the direction of sleep and dreaming," writes Metz.[52] Not only do the "customary forms" of exhibition impose darkness and immobility upon the audience; they also elicit an attitude by way of certain rituals and rules of comportment, such that the filmgoer "had decided in advance to conduct himself as a spectator . . . for the duration of the projection he puts off any plan of action." The result of these protocols is to momentarily sever the audience's bonds to waking life and to reduce alertness, as most clearly illustrated at the point of their termination: "In ordinary screening conditions, as everyone has had the opportunity to observe, the subject who has fallen prey to the filmic state . . . feels he is in a kind of daze, and spectators at the exit, brutally rejected by the black belly of the cinema into the bright, unkind light of the foyer, sometimes have the bewildered expression (happy or unhappy) of people waking up. To leave the cinema is a little like getting out of bed: not always easy."[53] Thus, Metz compares the filmic situation to "*a kind of sleep in miniature*."[54] And just as "the internal process of the dream is predicated in its particulars on the economic conditions of sleep," as Freud has argued, so this miniature sleep in the theater paves the way for "perceptual transference," which is Metz's term for "that dream-like and sleepy confusion of film and reality" situated at the crux of the cinema's power.[55] The soporific inducements of the filmic situation bring about the beginnings of psychic regression, in which one begins to mistake impressions for reality, "to perceive as true and external the events and the heroes of the fiction rather than the images and sounds belonging purely to

the screening process (which is, nonetheless, the only real agency): a tendency, in short, to perceive as real the represented and not the representer (the technological medium of the representation), to pass over the latter without seeing it for what it is."[56] Therefore, emerging from the state of perceptual transference, "the subject not coincidentally has the feeling of 'waking up': this is because he has furtively engaged in the state of sleeping and dreaming. The spectator will have dreamt a little bit of the film."[57]

Baudry and Metz closely follow Freud in delineating how the conditions of exhibition modify the psychical system so as to detour the processes of consciousness in a waking state—reducing the reach of the senses, decapacitating the mechanisms of thought, and ultimately bringing about a state of deception like that experienced by the dreamer who believes in the reality of the dream. They derive a theory of spectatorship from Freud's conception of sleep as a regression that paves the way for a host of other regressive transformations of the psyche. If sleep involves a "temporal regression" to an earlier phase of existence, it also opens up a pathway for "topographical regression" by allowing excitations to flow "in a *backward* direction."[58] Wishes and thoughts, instead of being discharged in motor actions, flow back into the perceptual system. To dream is to enter into a state akin to hallucinatory psychosis, characterized by the loss of the ability to differentiate between perceptions generated from within and those provoked by external stimulation. Likewise, a similar reflux of perception takes place during the screening. "The cinematographic apparatus brings about a state of artificial regression," argues Baudry. By means of the darkness of the space, the compelled passivity of the viewer, and the projection of image, the apparatus of exhibition "artificially leads back to an anterior phase of his development—a phase which is barely hidden, as dream and certain pathological forms of our mental life have shown."[59] According to Metz, too, the filmic state is marked by "the beginning of regression." For the filmgoer, "the psychical energy which, in other circumstances of waking life, would be dissipated in action is, by contrast conserved . . . . It will turn back in the direction of the perceptual agency, to take the regressive path, to busy itself with hypercathecting perception from within."[60]

By way of the economic transformations of sleep, then, Baudry and Metz arrive at a theory of spectatorship that situates it in adjacency to regression and pathology, implicating cinema's appeal to the eye in complex processes that produce blindness, masking, and misrecognition. Their arguments consolidate a particular model of reception that would come to exert a powerful influence during a period when movie spectatorship became an object of intense scrutiny and debate. Film theory inherits from psychoanalysis a paralytic reading of the scene of reception, absorbing the regressive thesis of sleep so as to emphasize the immobilization of not just the audience's bodies, but also their capacities to think and to act in the face of the filmic image. This account of spectatorial processes relays an already established discourse of narcotic reception, in order to shift this discourse toward

the dream—more everyday and inescapable than hypnosis—as an instantiation of cognitive debilitation and ontological deception. The regression of sleep is enlisted for an indictment of illusionism.

Moreover, Baudry's and Metz's analyses harness the modern devaluation of sleep to a problem of ideology that constitutes the "core" of the film theory of this era. To the extent that sleep has long signified the evacuation of reason, it is now aligned with, in the words of Rodowick, "an illusory 'reality-effect' that transparently communicates the dominant ideology."[61] The drowsy and confused spectator attests to the mystificatory efficacy of industrial cinema, embodying an "ideological relation to the apparatus" that is in the final instance acquiescent and defenseless.[62] This putative sleeper is figured as a locus of manipulation and dispossession. In contrast to this condition, Rodowick argues, theory claims for itself an "ever-vigilant" position by offering "a secure cognitive context for critically examining and breaking with ideology."[63] It assumes the mission of rousing the viewer from the spell of narcosis, restoring the reality principle to its rightfully paramount place, and forging a road map for awakening. The theorist's response to the temptations of cinematic darkness is to call upon the daylight of reason in order to illuminate an exit route from the cave of sleep and dreams. Thus, Metz explicitly draws a contrast between the sleepy confusion of the generic spectator and the state of mind of the semiologist who, like a night watchman, forces himself "into a regime of maximal wakefulness."[64] In this theoretical model, the division between sleeping and waking maps onto another set of oppositions—between deception and knowledge, idealism and materialism, obscurity and lucidity. In situating sleeping and dreaming at the core of the spectatorial experience, Baudry and Metz also call upon an enduring association of sleep with "a subjectivity on which power can operate with the least political resistance."[65]

Returning to the portrait of the movie audience in *Holy Motors* with their readings in mind, we can interpret it as an illustration of everything that psychoanalytic film theory identifies as troubling about the collective cinematic dream. What is disconcerting about this portrait is not merely that the entire audience sleeps; rather it is the oddly spectral quality of their sleep, which renders them indistinguishable from one another. Behind the curtain of this perfectly orderly slumber, their individual features recede from view. At the same time, their repose has an unnatural lightness to it, lacking the messy physicality that characterizes the sleeping body in the everyday world. The audience floats in a state of suspended animation, motionless to an inhuman degree, more statuary than even corpse-like. Their bodies do not summon to mind sleepers in real life so much as anesthetized patients (an image that would have been familiar to Baudry, given his day job as a dentist).[66] Weightless and untextured, their condition points less to a bodily affair than to a subject effect and an allegory of spectatorial consciousness. Here sleep serves as the paradigmatic image of a hijacked vision, reflecting the sameness and



FIGURE 51. *Holy Motors* (Leos Carax, 2012).

standardization of audience response identified by Comolli, along with the universality and inescapability of the spectatorial regime conceived by Baudry and Metz. Viewed through the lens of their arguments, the scene exposes the anxieties about the loss of independent thought and susceptibility to systematic manipulations that are never far from the imagination of *any* sleeping collective.

Situated within the scene but also at a remove from the shared condition it depicts is the pajama-clad director who has stumbled upon it. Like the bright-eyed theorist, he sees the audience as they cannot see themselves, privy to the cinema's secrets and seemingly inoculated from its stupor. Will he rouse them? But perhaps the director is himself asleep, drawn into a deeper layer of his dream by a false awakening, and therefore an unreliable guide to the boundary between the real and the unreal (as suggested by the short story Carax names as the inspiration for this sequence, "Don Juan" by E. T. A. Hoffmann). *Holy Motors* does not settle the question. Despite lending visual persuasion to the discourse of narcotic reception, the scene hints at the limits of the regressive thesis with its insistence on the lucid sobriety of awakening. It invites us to question the self-assurance of the vigilant theorist despite the latter's claim to a superior vision. If the image of slumber presented here is curious, at once literal and abstracted, this mirrors the curious and paradoxical status of sleep within psychoanalytic accounts of spectatorship. For the activity of sleep simultaneously functions as a crucial foundation for the argument that the experience of cinema is comparable to dreaming *and* an obstacle to this same argument. To take the discourse of narcotic reception at its literal word, by envisioning an audience that actually sleeps, their eyes closed to the projection before them, reveals the point at which this discourse collapses under the weight of its own contradictions, and from which a wholly different understanding of reception begins to take shape.

Baudry and Metz build their metapsychological arguments around a hypothetical viewer whose eyes are open, awake to the image and thereby absorbed in the resulting impression of reality. Sleep in a functional sense—that is, defined as a set of modifications to normal perceptual processing, catalyzed by the conditions of theatrical exhibition—supports the analogy between filmgoing and dreaming. Taken in a more literal sense, however, sleep presents a stumbling block, raising the prospect of a break in the filmgoer's visual bond with the film. Baudry briefly acknowledges the differences between the dreamer and the film spectator in his discussion, only to brush aside any hint of contradiction. To be sure, he concedes, cinematographic projection only partially eliminates the viewer's access to reality testing, in contrast to the more total elimination of sleep, such that "the subject has always the choice to close his eyes, to withdraw from the spectacle, or to leave." But nonetheless, he maintains, "no more than in dream does he have means to act in any way upon the object of his perception, nor to change his viewpoint as he would like. There is no doubt that in dealing with images, and the unfolding of images, the rhythm of vision and movement are imposed on him in the same way as images in dream and hallucination."[67] For Baudry, the similitude of the dream overrides the difference of sleep. Indeed, the idea of a filmgoer who reacts to the screening environment by actually falling asleep seems never to occur to him. This is because "The Apparatus" deals neither with actual sleep nor actual spectators, but rather with an abstracted schema composed of the apparatus, its simulations, and their resulting subject effects. In his reading it is enough to collapse sleep into the functions it brings about, and to conclude on this basis that "cinema offers a simulation of regressive movement which is characteristic of dream"—stopping just short of asserting that cinema puts its audience to sleep.[68]

For Metz, however, the contradiction presented by sleep is a more intractable problem, less readily dispelled as well as intriguing enough to warrant closer scrutiny. The very first sentence of "The Fiction Film and Its Spectator" is a declaration of the incontrovertible difference between the dreamer and the spectator: "The dreamer does not know that he is dreaming; the film spectator knows that he is at the cinema: this is the first and principal difference between situations of film and dream. We sometimes speak of the illusion of reality in one or the other, but true illusion belongs to the dream and to it alone."[69] With this cautionary note in mind, Metz continues to develop his comparison between the metapsychology of the dream state and that of the filmic state. But even as he goes on to enumerate the similarities between them, he also keeps returning to the gaps that thwart this analogy. For instance, Metz observes that another major difference between the two states concerns hallucinatory wish fulfillment. While the dream is made to the perfect measure of the wishes of the dreamer, the film can achieve only a poor fit, for "it rests on true perceptions which the subject cannot fashion to his liking." Unlike the dream, which is bound to the pleasure principle, the film cannot fully escape the reality principle.[70] Moreover, he writes, "filmic perception *is* a real perception

(is really a perception)" that is experienced with other spectators; "it is not reducible to an internal psychical process" in the way of a "true illusion" or a "true hallucination."[71] Metz accordingly hedges his claims—the filmic state represents a "semi-regression" versus the total regression of sleep, he clarifies—and attends carefully to the degrees that intervene between the poles of impression and illusion.[72]

Reservations of this sort accumulate in the course of his discussion, congeal into a running counterargument to the explicit thesis of the essay, and consolidate around a central assertion: that the gap between the dream state and the filmic state boils down to the problem of sleep. As Metz writes, "The dominant situation is that in which film and dream are not confounded: this is because the film spectator is a man awake, whereas the dreamer is a man asleep."[73] If the economic transformations of sleep provide a theoretical armature for the dream metaphor, they also constitute the loose thread that can unravel the metaphor altogether. Yet Metz cannot resist tugging on this thread. As he well recognizes, the very moment that the regressive movement activated by cinema reaches its endpoint, when the filmgoer closes their eyes to the film and surrenders to sleep, the entire conceptual edifice caves in on itself. In a remarkable passage, he describes this paradox as a kind of monster haunting the nightmares of the waking theorist:

> When we trace the obscure kinship relations (interwoven as they are by differences) of the film and the dream, we come upon that unique and methodologically attractive object, that theoretical monster . . . a dream, in short, like life. That is to say (we always come back to this), the dream of a man awake, a man who knows that he is dreaming, and who consequently knows that he is not dreaming, who knows that he is at the cinema, *who knows that he is not sleeping;* since if a man who is sleeping is a man who does not know that he is sleeping, a man who knows that he is not sleeping is a man who is not sleeping.[74]

The theorization of cinema as an impression of reality skates precariously on the razor edge of sleep. And, as Metz well demonstrates, he who invokes the imminence of sleep while simultaneously warding off its arrival might find himself twisted into knots.

Metz responds to this problem not by patching over the hole it opens in his argument, as Baudry does, but rather by diving straight into it. Eschewing the disappearing act achieved by reducing sleep to a set of regressive modifications, Metz takes the sleepy spectator as an equally central object of theoretical interest, the counterpart of the spectator who dreams with open eyes. This figure—a drowsy viewer wobbling unsteadily at the edges of consciousness, adrift in the transitional zone between sleeping and waking—becomes the genesis for an alternative line of investigation in the essay. "The Fiction Film and Its Spectator" cleaves at the point of sleep, splitting into two distinct critical tracks: on the one hand, a psychoanalytic account of film as dream and, on the other hand, a psychosomatic, even phenomenological, account of sleeping in the theater.[75] In order to arrive at the juncture of the filmic state and the dream state, it is not enough for Metz to simply

map the viewing situation and the abstracted spectator into a schema of simulated regression. Rather, his approach also requires an attention to the concrete variables of bodies perhaps already fatigued, minds more or less already emotionally spent, as these enter a space of darkness and encounter "a mill of images and sounds overfeeding our zones of shadow and irresponsibility . . . a machine for grinding up affectivity and inhibiting action."[76] By way of this line of reasoning, Metz arrives at another view of the relationship between sleeping and waking—less as a binary opposition, in turn corresponding to an opposition between ignorance and knowledge, and more as a sliding scale.

Considering sleep leads Metz beyond the conception of spectatorship that is typically attributed to psychoanalytic film theory, that of a punctual subject effect inscribed by cinema's conventional patterns and situation. To the same degree that he takes seriously the proposition of actual sleep in the movie theater, he also departs from a view that readily conflates sleep with a condition of deception. Tracing cinema's somnolent effects, Metz follows the movements of a hypothetical embodied viewer who exists in time, drifting up and down this sliding scale, drawing nearer to or retreating from the point of perceptual transference on a moment-to-moment basis. He describes scenarios in which, "for brief instances of fleeting intensity," the gap between the state of the dreamer (unaware that they are dreaming) and that of the filmgoer (aware that they are at the cinema) can diminish, and "the subject's consciousness of the filmic situation as such starts to become a bit murky and to waver, although this slippage, the mere beginning of a slippage, is never carried to its conclusion."[77] By way of example, Metz refers to the urbane adult filmgoers who are habituated to conduct themselves with silence and stillness inside the theater, in contrast to children or country audiences inclined to respond with animated outbursts of voice and gesture. Such a filmgoer, especially if already "in a state of fatigue or emotional turmoil" and moved profoundly by the film, is most likely to experience the slippage he describes.[78] This viewer might slip into perceptual transference, what Metz refers to as a dizziness or "psychical giddiness" aroused in a fleeting, anomalous moment when dreaming and seeing coincide, and the viewer dreams what they actually see. Whether the moment of perceptual transference comes about depends on the audience member's preexisting state ("when one has not had enough sleep, dozing off is usually more a danger during the projection of a film") and social profile ("there is material here for a socio-analytic typology of the different ways of attending a film screening").[79] Even while explicating spectatorship as a psychic regime of perception, Metz keeps other dimensions in play and fleshes out his hypothetical viewer with a body, history, and context.

On one side of sleep is the drowsy filmgoer, their wakefulness ebbing as they succumb to the cinema's invitation to relax, taking steps in the direction of sleeping and dreaming until they arrive at that brief flash of psychical giddiness. On the other side, Metz posits a counterpart to this figure, a dreamer who is only partially

submerged in sleep. Much as wakefulness diminishes for the filmgoer, so sleep can loosen its grip on the dreamer. There are moments when "deep sleep steals away," when the dreamer acquires a lucid alertness to their situation and realizes, "I am in the middle of a dream." During such moments, the illusion of reality splits open, exposing the dream as such. Metz explains these ruptures by recourse to Freud's observations about the at times conflicted relationship between sleeping and dreaming. Even if sleep is the economic precondition for dreaming, their correlation is far from straightforward, as dreams, "even when accompanied by deep sleep, wake up [the function of consciousness] and put it to work."[80] Metz absorbs Freud's conclusion that dreams, while appearing to be the guardians of sleep, can have contrary effects as residues of some part of the mind that disobeys the wish to sleep; the two states do not coexist in perfect accord. The experience of dreaming therefore unfolds by way of interaction in time with sleep's "characteristic rhythms." As in the filmic situation, the perceptual transference of the dream is modulated by shifting degrees of wakefulness. In both cases, the normal regime of functioning can be momentarily interrupted by gaps—like the psychical giddiness of the filmgoer or the lucidity of the dreamer. And it is here, in these gaps, that Metz identifies "a kinship at once more profound and dialectical" between the filmic state and the dream state: "The filmic and dream states tend to converge when the spectator begins to doze off . . . or when the dreamer begins to wake up."[81]

The drifting consciousness of sleep, then, leads to a surprising theoretical destination. Metz does not end by mobilizing the division between sleep and waking to sustain an opposition between a narcotic mode of viewing that is defenseless against the projected image and a hyperalert stance of critical awareness. Instead, he looks to those moments of convergence where this opposition breaks down, and when the experience of film does not cleave neatly along the pure extremes of wakefulness and unconsciousness. Mapping the dynamics of spectatorship through an emphasis on intermediary states and "borderline cases," Metz arrives at a view of reception that calls into question the notions of a totalized subject effect and a uniform spectatorial position.[82] For him, the special power of film is to momentarily reconcile regimes of consciousness that are typically distinct and mutually exclusive, to link them so as to allow for "overlapping, alternating balance, partial coincidence, staggering, and ongoing circulation."[83] Dreaming in the theater is the result of an at best tenuous, always shifting equilibrium between disparate, contradictory states. The cinematic trance, far from being unbroken or unbreakable, is constantly slipping into something else. The subject of cinema hovers at a volatile juncture, shaped by processes of abstraction and disembodiment, but also by intransigent materialities and opacities. Arriving at this juncture, psychoanalytic film theory reaches beyond its own initial premises.

Recently, the metapsychology of spectatorship set forth by Baudry and Metz has been reinforced with a historical and architectural foundation by the authors of several notable studies. Describing the emergence and evolution of the movie

theater in its atmospheric and material details, these studies build a nuanced account of the complex relationships between exhibitionary space, viewer attention, and the character of the movie audience. They contribute to an understanding of the experience of cinema as part of a trajectory of discipline, wherein the norms of spectatorship are consolidated by a situation in which the viewer's attention is highly circumscribed, their responses subject to strict regulation. Negation and forgetting are fundamental to the aesthetic goal of focalizing and immersing the audience within the film, to the degree that they detach from their physical surroundings—from the space, the other people in it, and their own bodies. For instance, in *The Optical Vacuum: Spectatorship and Modernized American Theater Architecture*, Szczepaniak-Gillece tracks the rise during the post-Depression years of a new conception of the theater as an "optical vacuum"—that is, a space that deliberately erases itself to emphasize the projected image. The model of the optical vacuum ushers in a turn toward a neutralized theater—stripped of the ornamentation characterizing the silent-era picture palace, aligned with modernist design values of efficiency and functionality, and aspiring to the illusion of a "dematerialized auditorium." It is, writes Szczepaniak-Gillece, a design for oblivion, aiming for "a spectatorship of purified presence" that would leave the viewer's body behind.[84] Long before Baudry and Metz theorized the spectator as a transcendental subject, she demonstrates, such a subject was envisioned as an explicit design objective by theater architects.

Counterbalancing the visual emphasis of the optical vacuum, Meredith Ward's *Static in the System: Noise and the Soundscape of American Cinema Culture* addresses the history of theater design in the sound-film era from the standpoint of architectural acoustics. In engineering the cinema as an auditorium, or a space for listening, acousticians referred to the goal of sonic absorption, striving to draw the filmgoer into an intimate relationship with the sounds of the film while suppressing to the greatest extent possible the distraction of ambient noises from inside the theater. The acoustic design of the movie theater was guided by an injunction "to enter the film's sonic world as a transcendent auditor at the expense of the space that surrounds us," thereby fusing the audio-spectator with the spectacle.[85] In this regard, the cinema auditorium inherits an ideal of purified listening from nineteenth-century musical aesthetics, one that was realized in the cone-shaped concert hall designed by Richard Wagner at Bayreuth. Like the Festspielhaus, the film theater aims to isolate and engross the listener so as to render them, in the composer's words, "oblivious of self in the delight inspired by a masterpiece of art."[86]

Numerous other commentators have pointed to the genealogy that links the commercial venues of film projection with the theatrical innovations of Wagner. Early on, Beat Wyss observed that the idea of the black box exemplified in the nineteenth-century concert hall would eventually provide the template for the twentieth-century movie theater.[87] What these more recent historical studies

of theatrical exhibition emphasize is that cinema, beyond inheriting the architectural strategies of the Festspielhaus, also perpetuates the latter's central animating proposition that, in order for the spectacle to reign supreme, "*the empirical being of the spectator must be extinguished*."[88] Or, as Noam Elcott argues, only from within the movie theater can we begin to fully comprehend "the radicality of Bayreuth" as a technology of artificial darkness. In banishing light, the black box theater also "negated space, disciplined bodies, and suspended corporeality in favor of the production and reception of images."[89] The dream of a disembodied, vanishing audience is the thread that connects the writings of Wagner (who described his objective of a public that "disappears from the auditorium completely") to those of cinema architects, designers, and theorists throughout the twentieth century.[90]

The ideal of a spectator "oblivious of self" marks the convergence between an aesthetic objective of total immersion, the standardization of commercial film exhibition, and the subjectivizing operations of the theater as a dispositive in the Foucauldian sense of the term.[91] To the extent that these three studies shed light on the development of theatrical exhibition as an arrangement of elements having "the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviors, opinions, or discourses of living beings," they also trace the historical process by which an abstracted conception of the spectator comes to define cinema reception.[92] Such a spectator emerges as a function of technological mediation and a punctual position within a highly controlled audiovisual configuration. Likewise, the collective of viewers assembled in the theater is cast within a similar framework, with the public as a social body or corpus understood to be "literally extinguished."[93]

These accounts converge around the idea of oblivion as the final operative principle of the black box theater. In this regard, they bring a new set of historical evidence and arguments to bear upon, and lend credence to, the discourse of narcotic reception. The imagination of the audience submerged in slumber aligns with an understanding of the cinema experience as being defined chiefly by negation and forgetting, detachment and dislocation, compartmentalization and isolation. The oblivious spectators are doubly removed—from their differences as individuals as well as from their connections to one another as part of a viewing public that shares a common space. To the extent that it is possible at all to speak of the cinema audience as a community, it is an abstracted community composed of "eyes without bodies," in the words of Szczepaniak-Gillece, expunged of specificities and differences, coming together in a transcendent gaze.[94] Therefore it is sleep—as a force that overtakes the body and subordinates the waking consciousness, thus confronting us with the limits of self-determination and with the automatism that shadows our claims to volitional agency—that most aptly conveys the inexorability of the theater's operations as a dispositive, along with the passivity to which these operations consign the filmgoer. Oblivion appropriates the powers of sleep as it strives to bring the curtain down on a vital part of the

audience's embodied perception and to sever their bonds to their surroundings as well as to one another.

And yet, as all these writers also point out, the pursuit of a purified ideal of spectatorship was fraught with paradox if not, ultimately, doomed to fail. A closer consideration of sleeping at the movies brings these limitations into focus, notwithstanding all the ways that sleep has been called upon as a metaphor for oblivion, by serving up a reminder of the corporeal residues that muddy the waters of transcendence. For with the onset of somnolence comes the assertion of certain intractable resistances to the disappearing act pulled off by the exhibitionary dispositive. As Metz has demonstrated, it points to the failure of the dispositive's operations to reach their full conclusion and to sustain a consistent hold on the filmgoer's consciousness for the entire duration of the screening. Sleep brings into play other forms of oblivion, and in so doing might give rise to a wholly different sense of how the movie theater shapes audience attention. Is there another way of construing the sleepy spectator, then, one that can clarify other dimensions of the cinema experience and recast the relationships among the space, the individual viewer, and the audience as a whole?

The discussions of the following chapters take up this question. They connect with an ambiguity that has always resided within the idea of cinematic narcosis, as evidenced in the writings of Romains, Kracauer, and Metz. Even more emphatically for those whose ideas are detailed below, sleep breaks free from the confines of the regressive thesis, giving rise to another view of somnolent spectatorship. All share the sense that waking up or leaving the movie theater may not be enough to vanquish the spell of ideology. Rather than laying claim to the superior vision of the alert watchman, who stands apart and resists the night of cinema, they ask whether this narcosis can be a condition worth dwelling in. Besides a degraded mode of apprehension, sleep might be something else or even something more. It can lead toward an open field of differential effects, in which the subject is "recast according to different wavelengths," and in which viewers' perceptions and sensations can extend beyond their most habitual zones, unfurling toward edges and thresholds that are less commonly frequented. Cinema can provide an opportunity to further explore this unfamiliar territory by carving out a space in which to prolong transitional states and linger at the edges of sleep in the presence of others. To admit the multivalence of sleep, then, is to reanimate the question of the cinema experience and audience, both in their historical instantiations and their contemporary mutations.

9

A Little History of Sleeping at the Movies

The sleeping movie audience in *Holy Motors* is presented as the director Leos Carax's nocturnal vision—a mirage that interrupts his tranquil repose, perhaps a dream that beckons him toward a false awakening, or a nostalgic wish become a nightmare. The shot that takes us out of this movie theater cuts like a knife through its atmosphere of murky torpor. The dark auditorium is replaced by the bright outdoors, from which we behold a young girl who looks intently out of a porthole-like window. She is separated from us and somewhat blurred by a sheet of glass that reflects dark shadows against a white sky while concealing the details of the interior space. The sounds of rustling wind and a moving train that come from the projected film in the previous scene continue to be heard in this new space. It is not clear how to relate this image to that which precedes it—as a reverse shot that reveals what is playing on the screen before the picture palace audience, as the sound bridge suggests? Or is the child in the window (who is played by the director's daughter, Nastya Golubeva Carax) meant to be identified with the figures assembled within the theater? Like the movie audience, she is transfixed in place by a framed visual spectacle, a seer perched behind a window and facing the camera, whose gaze is directed at a place beyond the frame. Another consonance is suggested by the pajamas she wears, mirroring Carax's garb in the previous shot as well as placing her within range of the cinema's soporific spell, in proximity to the dozing audience. Yet in contrast to the latter, this character evinces the alert curiosity of the child, embodying not a receptive stance that is disconnected, closed in upon itself, and mired in oblivion, but rather one characterized by wonder and receptive openness to the world. As the camera tracks back, the shadows are revealed to be the leafy outlines of trees, and the girl seems to be suspended among them, hovering and caught in the reflections of her own vision. The image calls to mind a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Sleep lingers all our lifetime about our



FIGURE 52. *Holy Motors* (Leos Carax, 2012).

eyes, as night hovers all day in the boughs of the fir-tree."[1] Dreaming by the window, this pajama-clad figure evokes a visual lineage of children dreaming in bed.

The child as both an emblem of visual absorption and an actual moviegoer appears in *Weegee's People*, a book of the New York photographer's images published in 1946. Organized as a rotation through the city's places of gathering and entertainment—from the Metropolitan Opera to the jazz clubs of Harlem and the East Village, from the exhibitionist parade of high society to interchanges of a more clandestine nature—*Weegee's People* includes a chapter entitled "The Children's Hour."[2] A brief introduction identifies the chapter's contents as photographs of a Saturday matinee screening for children at the Loew's Commodore Theater on Second Avenue in New York City. The images are made by a camera that, like the film camera in *Holy Motors*, is positioned inside the movie theater, trained away from the screen and toward the audience. The camera's perspective regards the filmgoers as they regard the picture playing before them, with a gaze that pierces the theater's darkness. Children of various ages make up the audience, their faces rendered ghostly and masklike under the harsh light of the infrared flashbulbs employed by Weegee in dark settings such as this one. The expressions on their faces range from serious intensity to grinning delight to bored indifference. They watch the film with varying degrees of attentiveness—some perched at the edge of their seats, alert and rapt like the girl framed in the circular window, others slumping into soft layers of clothing and upholstery, with more distracted gazes. In one of the photos, the children's heads droop to the side like wilting flowers, their postural laxity a sign of the incipient arrival of sleep. In another one, a boy in a more advanced state of muscular surrender curls on his side, leaning his head on the armrest; his eyes have a vacant look, as if he no longer sees what is in front of him. Pressing further along this drowsy trajectory, we discover a girl who seems to



FIGURE 53. "The Children's Hour," from *Weegee's People* (Weegee, 1946).

have reached a point of enviably peaceful relaxation. She leans back into her chair, melting into its depths, her arms flopped out on the armrests in a manner that recalls the tendency of some bodies to sprawl in their slumber. Her eyelids, like her body, droop heavily, as if the camera has caught her on the very cusp of sleep, in those final seconds just before she nods off completely.

These images from *Weegee's People* represent a subset of a larger corpus of photographs shot in New York City's movie theaters in the 1940s and 1950s by Arthur Fellig, known by his professional moniker Weegee. Most of these photos were made with an infrared photography process that combined a flash emitting long wavelengths of light undetectable by the human eye with film stock treated to register these wavelengths. Taking advantage of the cover of cinematic darkness and the "invisible light" of the infrared flash, Weegee shot moviegoers in the act of moviegoing. The majority of these images, like those from "The Children's Hour," cast a surreptitious spotlight on film viewers who betray no knowledge that they are being viewed. Thus, the voyeuristic position afforded by Weegee's camera mirrors that which has been attributed to classical cinema's spectator. The sum result of this endeavor is a casual visual ethnography of the New York movie audience, encompassing the heights of theatrical exhibition as well as the beginning of its decline. Details such as the shape of the chairs, the pattern of their upholstery, and the layout of the theater provide clues to the settings in which Weegee made

these portraits. While he took a large number of such photographs, the details of the décor suggest that they were taken in only a handful of theaters. Only a small selection of these photographs have ever been published.

The movie theater photographs sit comfortably within Weegee's project of documenting the forms of sociality, the sites of diversion and distraction, and the "passion to see" that flourished in the city's public spaces. (Christian Metz's definition of voyeurism serves as an apt description for Weegee's people[3]). The consumers of cinema are portrayed in a manner that recalls the audiences of the other venues to which his camera was also drawn, such as the circus, opera, and jazz clubs. They find yet another direct counterpart in the onlookers who gather outside on the streets to gawk at the unfortunate casualties of violence as readily as they do at organized spectacles. For instance, in one of his most well-known photographs, *Their First Murder* (1941), a group of Brooklyn children witness a murder outside their school, craning their necks to ogle the scene.[4] Similar images of the spectating crowd clustering at the site of accidents and crimes recur throughout his body of work. The visual hunger evinced by the spectators across these different locations is one and the same. The mixture of reactions expressed by them—by turns distressed and astonished, exhilarated and blasé—is also remarkably consistent. These underlying commonalities even rise to the level of a sardonic commentary by the photographer himself in some instances, as in a 1942 photo taken in front of the Tudor film theater on Third Avenue. In the aftermath of a fatal car accident, a group of onlookers encircles a corpse covered in newspapers. Above them in plain sight, the theater marquee displays the titles of an Irene Dunne double feature, *Joy of Living* and *Don't Turn Them Loose*. The ogling crowd here might very well include moviegoers drawn off course as they exit and enter the theater.

Weegee's photographs capture a culture of the look specific to wartime and postwar urban America, extraordinarily attuned as they are to the social character of the passion to see. Crowds of people convene wherever there is something to watch, these images tell us, and a particular kind of urban communality comes into being at the scene of the crime as much as in venues of exhibition and entertainment. To view these images in aggregate is to gain an insight into the perceptual dynamics, states of exposure, forms of relationality, and imbrications of anonymity with intimacy that manifest across a landscape of urban spectacle—or across the city *as* spectacle, an idea suggested by the title of Weegee's most famous book, *Naked City*. Moreover, not only do his photos document this passion for seeing, but they embody it in the very conditions of their production and circulation: Weegee's successful career as a photographer was enabled by the newspapers, tabloids, and illustrated magazines that thrived in the age of the picture press by catering to the visual hunger of the reading public and fostering a robust market for photographic images.[5] Although he established his initial reputation as a photojournalist with an uncanny knack for timing when shadowing the police beat and capturing sensationalist images



FIGURE 54. "Joy of Living" (Weegee, 1942).

of true crime, what is most compelling in his work is not the crime itself but the reactions elicited by it, as Lucy Sante has noted. The many images he made of people caught in the act of looking, their line of vision trained on a point beyond the edges of the frame, are "in many ways his truest portraits. Not only are his subjects so absorbed in what they are viewing that they give themselves to the camera, uncomposed and naked, but by virtue of the act of looking they become avatars of the photographer himself. Weegee puts himself in their shoes, and imagines them in his. They are a city of eyes, joined together by curiosity."[6]

Weegee's interest in shooting film audiences can be construed as an extension of the broader themes and structures of the look found throughout his photography, taking into account the centrality of the movies as a popular pastime. Not only does his work situate the audience of movies within the broader context of an urban culture of visuality, but in the process of documenting this audience he also forges an immanent perspective on the experience of cinema in public theatrical settings. Indeed, Weegee's images constitute something rare—a stealth photographic archive of film spectatorship around the midpoint of the twentieth

century. By affording access, however piecemeal and mediated it may be, to real filmgoers in real theaters, his photographs contribute important insights on the history of cinema spectatorship in the form of visual arguments about the movie audience. They constitute a photojournalistic discourse that can be usefully brought into dialogue with those that invoke the audience as a theoretical construct, an abstracted model, a textual position, or a statistical entity. Taken together, the images construct both a visual record of the activity of filmgoing and an editorial commentary on this activity from the point of view of a photographer who "understood the darkness of night as the enabling condition of his city work" and who presented his practice as a secretive art of the photoflash.[7] In many instances, this particular way of seeing involved pulling back the cover of night to expose the indiscretions masked by it and the nakedness underneath, in a voyeuristic or even invasive fashion. At the same time, in so doing Weegee forged a pact with darkness and obscurity. As Alan Trachtenberg describes his photography, "the light that discloses is the same light that obscures with a sense of darkness closing in," and blackness is "the medium within which vision occurs."[8]

This paradoxical entwinement of revealing and concealing is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the infrared exposures taken by Weegee in the near complete absence of perceptible light, seizing a liquid moment from the darkness without making a ripple in it.[9] Consider the first of the images in "The Children's Hour," which frames a broad section of the balcony seating area inside the theater. The projection booth is positioned in the upper left corner of the picture, at the furthest rear of its plane, so that the light from the projector shoots out diagonally through the space of the theater, drawing a cone of bright white across the width of the photograph. The brilliant electric glow of the projector's beam obliterates everything in its path and erases all markers of dimension or depth, almost as if it were painted onto the picture's surface. Yet the reflections it casts on the surrounding space enable the viewer to discern the audience members who fill nearly all the balcony seats (some of them haloed by the reflected luminosity) and to make out architectural features like the ornate molding on the ceiling. Even as the light erases depth and repels the gaze, the darkness acquires features and offers itself to the gaze, emerging into visibility without relinquishing its character as darkness. The matrix of illumination and obscurity, perceptibility and imperceptibility established in this image offers a critical framework in which to consider not just the other images in "The Children's Hour," but all Weegee's movie theater photographs. In reminding us of just how dark were the places where he took these photos, the image crystallizes the method by which the interior blackness of the theater is made into the medium for a photographic vision, one that divulges dimensions and qualities of the cinema experience that might otherwise slip by unnoticed. The darkness provides a cover for not only the audience members but also Weegee himself, armed with his voyeuristic camera and "invisible light" (as he liked to call the infrared flash), and disguised as a concession vendor roaming the movie theater's aisles or blending in with the audience.[10]

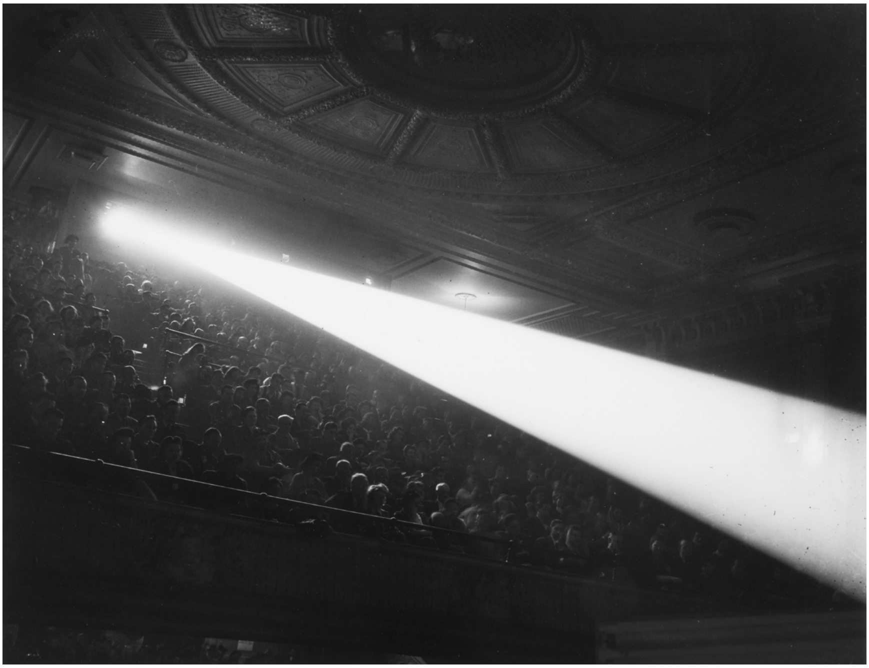


FIGURE 55. “The Children’s Hour,” from *Weegee’s People* (Weegee, 1946).

If these photographs accomplish a kind of seeing in the dark, it is nonetheless a seeing that proceeds blindly by way of sending out probes toward what is shrouded from sight. In Weegee’s account of the making of these images, he describes aiming his camera at the audience and pressing the shutter release in response to the sounds he heard, often without knowing exactly what he was shooting.[11] With this technique, he enlists the camera for what Eluned Summers-Bremner calls a project of “nocturnal literacy,” naming a historical and critical endeavor “to recognize the complex interaction of unconscious or invisible activities.”[12] The cultivation of nocturnal literacy can be described in similar terms as an endeavor to see in the dark, reaching for discernment of those modes of agency and states of being that are specific to obscurity in its different forms. Applying this photographic vision and nocturnal literacy to the scene of film projection opens up new perspectives on the film audience and the experience of spectatorship in shared public spaces. It paves the way for a recognition that those aspects of reception that are withheld from visibility are not perforce extinguished, obliterated, or negated. To construe darkness as a force of derealization on the basis that it erases things from sight, as many have argued, is to neglect a valuable opportunity to enlist the other senses for an understanding of the cinema experience. Weegee’s photographic archive of filmgoing points beyond the oblivion thesis toward another view of the theater and what it contains. They construct a vantage point on the cinema situation wherein

a rubric of invisibility that prioritizes the faculty of sight gives way to a rubric of opacity that captures the haptic and multisensory dimensions of reception.

Within Weegee's archive are several photographs that frame the theater auditorium in a long view, thus conveying the large size of the audience and implying the cultural status of movies as mass medium. They differ from Weegee's other pictures of the cinema audience in that they appear to be taken before the commencement of the screening (or perhaps during an intermission), in an auditorium that is still at least partially lit. The amassed filmgoers fill the frame and extend beyond its borders, their faces visible although not distinguishable in much detail. The camera is typically positioned on a tripod near the front of the room, at a slightly high and transverse angle, as if on the stage or in a box. From here it can be spotted by the people in the room, as suggested by one photo in which several members of the audience who are closest to the camera look directly at it, returning its gaze. These images compose a portrait of the moviegoing masses that we have seen before. They recall *Holy Motors*, which refers to a golden age of theatrical exhibition much like the one documented by Weegee; or the graphic renderings of an earlier era, such as the printed illustrations of the *foule immobile* that Jennifer Wild reads in connection with the rise of absorptive spectatorship as a gentrified mode of reception in France; or, more proximately, other photographic images of actual moviegoers, such as those taken by J. R. Eyerman at the 1952 Hollywood premier of *Bwana Devil*, the first commercial feature-length motion picture exhibited in 3D.[13] In one of these photos, published in *Life* magazine in that same year and circulated widely thereafter, we behold a sea of filmgoers all seated in a uniform grid-like formation, looking in the same direction, and wearing Polaroid glasses rimmed with bulky white cardboard. The 3D glasses render them uncannily similar in appearance while also serving as a visual reminder of the purpose that joins them together, such that this photo has come to stand as the paradigmatic image of cinema's mass audience and even, more broadly, of the "society of the spectacle."[14] As the *Life* caption stated, "the audience itself looked more startling than anything on the screen."[15]

Across such representations of the audience, the construction of cinema as a medium of "simultaneous collective reception" necessarily emphasizes certain features of the theatrical experience at the expense of others.[16] To depict the audience as a unitary mass is to call attention to the commonalities within which the individual viewers are bound—from the uniform orientation of their bodies, evenly fixed in place in the rows of seats, to the synchronicity of their reactions. The long shots of the movie audience adopt a distant view wherein the particularity of the detail recedes into the totality of the pattern. Stepping back to grasp the whole, they relinquish a clear sense of the spectator as an individual body, along with variations and distinctions that mar the total effect. This distance also has a critical edge, charged with the intimation that the viewer of the photograph, like the man in *Holy Motors*, sees the spectators as they cannot see themselves. Here



FIGURE 56. "An Eyeful at the Movies" (J. R. Eyerman, 1952).

what Sante calls the "city of eyes" converges with the community of "eyes without bodies" that Jocelyn Szczepaniak-Gillece associates with the black box theater. The very composition of the photographs implies the process by which audience members leave their identities behind in the act of joining together in a collective visual experience.

If such images nod to familiar conventions of portraying the audience of cinema, however, they in fact stand out as anomalies in Weegee's body of work. For the vast majority of the photographs he shot inside movie theaters disregard these conventions, rejecting a distanced totality in favor of more intimate and fragmentary views. The camera seems driven by a principle of idiosyncratic selectivity, relinquishing its grasp of the whole in order to fixate on the singularity of this body or that group of spectators, this particular pose or that facial expression. An impulse to get up close and inside of the scene of reception is also implied

in Weegee's way of printing the photographs. In his archive are many shots that consist of a blown-up and cropped portion of another photograph capturing a larger section of seats in a wider framing. By selecting and extracting specific figures, he creates portraits of filmgoers singly or in pairs.[17] Thus, certain audience members are singled out and pointed to as targets of visual interest, set apart from the larger crowd. In other instances, Weegee hones in on certain figures during the process of shooting, as if compelled to linger on them for a while to capture their expressions in their multiplicity—whether by framing them from different angles or by creating a series of snapshots across an interval of time. An example of the latter can be found in a group of photos of two women (sisters to judge from their likeness to each other) who react to the film they are watching with unreserved delight. The photos show (and we can sense, exult in) the shifts in their expressions, from the facial to the full-bodied, as they move between amused smiles, open-mouthed laughter, and exuberant hand gestures. Implied in Weegee's approach, then, is a process of zooming and cutting in, one that proceeds along both a spatial and a temporal axis, drawing us deeper into the space of the auditorium, further into the duration and rhythms of the screening, and into close proximity with individual moviegoers. Such an approach also constructs a different relationship between the photographer and the subject, who now occupy the same space rather than disparate positions vis-à-vis the scene of projection, the one uncritically absorbed and the other critically distant. What results is another kind of portrait, one that departs from the conventional iconography of the spectating mass welded together in simultaneity and fixation.

For Weegee, as much as for Metz, the view from inside the theater produces ample material "for a socio-analytic typology of the different ways of attending a film screening."[18] The audience captured by his camera defies reduction to a city of eyes without bodies or to an undifferentiated series of punctual subject positions. Rather, it wears the corporeal and sartorial signs of its historicity and sociological variety. In closer views, the homogeneous surface of the uniformly arranged mass becomes rippled by the heterogeneity of different ages, races, ethnicities, classes, and genders. Among the audience we see middle-aged businessmen in suits, who appear to have come to the movies directly from their offices; other workers who seem driven into the theater by exhaustion as much as visual desire; couples on dates; solitary filmgoers; groups of friends; sailors; people in fancy evening dress as well as casual street clothes. They include African American and Asian American filmgoers; children, teenagers, and the elderly. (In one of the photos, a woman in dark sunglasses can be seen, suggestive of how vision-impaired filmgoers may have experienced the cinema as an aural medium.)

Besides such demographic differences, the photographs also construct a strikingly multifarious catalog of all the activities that can possibly transpire during a screening, proceeding in parallel or at cross-purposes with the watching of a film. On the one hand, some of the viewers conform with the standard image of the



FIGURE 57. Girls Watching Movie (Weegee, ca. 1943).

immersed spectator oriented toward the screen, fully involved in what it depicts, and paying no heed to their surroundings. On the other hand, we also discover filmgoers who eat, drink, feed one other, gaze at each other, huddle with and lean on their neighbors, talk, laugh, lock lips and fondle (or repel their companion's attempts at physical contact), close their eyes, sink into positions of rest, and nap. Sometimes a variety of responses come together within a single frame, as in a remarkable shot of a group of young filmgoers. One of them has upstaged the film with a demonstration of her bubble-gum-blowing prowess, amusing those seated around her; the child directly in front of her appears to be out cold in a deep sleep, having twisted herself in her seat to repurpose the armrest as a pillow; meanwhile, others in their vicinity remain undistracted in their viewing. The juxtaposition of such diverse activities within the same composition makes for a portrait of the movie audience that stands in stark contrast to the examples discussed above. The perspective on film reception offered here complicates the prevailing historical account of spectatorship as a progressive refinement of a dispositive for controlling and binding the viewer's consciousness, whose lock hold on its subject is broken only with the decline of the theatrical exhibition of moving images and, concomitantly, the advent of platforms, media, and spaces that usher in more distracted, fragmentary, and mobile practices of reception.

The threat that cinema began to face in the 1950s with the rise of television, and its subsequent endeavor to maintain its audience numbers by means of technological innovations such as 3D, are noted in the text that accompanies several of Weegee's movie theater photographs published in the October 1953 issue of *Brief*. A commission from the magazine's editor for a pictorial report on the current state of moviegoing, entitled "Movies Are Better Than Ever," provided the photographer with another occasion to bring his camera into the film theater—in this case, one of the all-night venues of Manhattan's West 42nd Street "jungle."[19] The collation of several of the resulting images into a seven-page story marks another instance in which individual views of audience members come together as a visual argument about the cinema experience, now framed by an editorial voice that speaks directly to the historicity of this experience. The article begins with a question: "Why do people keep going to the movies, instead of staying home to watch television?" A different answer is proffered in each of the three subtitled sections that follow: "It's a good place to eat," "It's a fine place to sleep," and "It's a wonderful place to make love."[20] The first of these sections recalls the pictures of the children's matinee screening from *Weegee's People*, presenting images of children snacking as they watch the film (including a cropped close-up of the bubble-blowing girl). The second section compiles views of filmgoers asleep in their chairs, along with a shot of a startled-looking man who has just been awakened by the usher. The final section is illustrated with six photos of a man and woman sitting on a balcony, embracing and kissing. The distance between their bodies shrinks across the series of shots, while the cropping of the images also becomes tighter, ending with a close-up of the couple locking lips. The article concludes with a brief addendum that includes two images of people actually watching the film (including a photo of the laughing sisters), accompanied by text that follows "It's a wonderful place to make love" with the phrase, " . . . and, incidentally, to see a feature film or two."

The emphasis placed by the article on eating, sleeping, and lovemaking offers a clue to the question of why these activities are depicted with such frequency in Weegee's movie audience photographs. Given the orientation of *Brief* as a pulp magazine addressing a heterosexual male readership, combining topical stories with photographs of female pin-up models, the build-up to a voyeuristic glimpse of the amorous exchanges among couples in the audience is not surprising. The issue includes another such glimpse on its inside back cover, a full-page high angle shot of lovers kissing in a crowded theater, and in the sleep section of the article, which incongruously includes an image of a sailor clutching the chest of the woman next to him. What stands out most about the couple here and the one spotlighted in the final section are the disturbing signs that these are not consensual exchanges: the woman with the sailor holds herself in a stiff, self-protective pose, while the other woman attempts to repel her companion's advances. Curiously, the most unreservedly passionate embraces caught on film during the shoot—such as that of a couple whose bodies turn away from the screen to intertwine as they kiss, with



FIGURE 58. Weegee, "Movies Are Better than Ever," *Brief*, October 1953.

the woman's bare feet propped up on the seat in front of her—did not make the final cut for publication.[21]

Setting aside the prurient interest of what is masked by the darkness of the theater, however, it is notable that "Movies Are Better," in its rhetoric and visual evidence, affirms in no uncertain terms the enduring attraction of the theatrical film experience. This attraction resides least in the film itself, to which the article refers only as an afterthought. The position constructed in Weegee's photographs rejects the supposition already emerging at this time that audiences could be reliably enticed into the theater by a bigger picture and richer sound. These photos, the article declares, prove "why Hollywood doesn't need 3-D, super-screens or stereophonic sound to keep the customers coming."[22] Indeed, reflecting this stated position, although Weegee took several photos of a 3D film screening for this assignment (including that of the passionately kissing couple), none of the 3D shots appeared in the magazine. In this respect, the *Brief* photographs differ from Eyerman's photograph of the *Bwana Devil* audience—a contemporaneous example of cinema's collective of viewers itself viewed in the pages of the illustrated magazine—in their manner of depicting the movie audience, in their downplaying of the appeal of new exhibition technologies, and in their undercutting of the very notion that the audience's involvement with cinema is primarily visual.



FIGURE 59. Weegee, "Movies Are Better than Ever," *Brief*, October 1953.

For one thing, these images seem to insist, the gratifications of cinema are oral just as much as, or even more than, they are visual. They compose a multifaceted taxonomy of this cinematic orality: chewing, blowing, munching, sucking, and licking, on gum, popcorn, candies, ice cream cones, fingers, and lips. The figures singled out for attention—like the boy in the baseball cap whose entire face blissfully contracts around the lollipop that he holds carefully with both hands—defy the reduction of the film spectator to a disembodied gaze. From the abstract ideal of the pair of eyes fixated on the screen, we arrive at the photo-documentary image of a pair of lips suctioned to a blob of sugar. To the extent that the photos offer a glimpse into the history of spectatorship, it is from a perspective that seeks out and magnifies dimensions of the experience that are elided by accounts of film reception as "a particular system of consciousness limited to a single sense," to recall a phrase from Jean Epstein.[23] In calling attention to the multisensory indulgences afforded by the movie theater, they verify those competing accounts that redefine reception on the basis of its tactile and corporeal engagements.[24]

Weegee's depiction of moviegoing anticipates not only film theory's turn toward phenomenologies of the body, but also film histories that turn to the specific spaces in which films were commercially projected as the starting point from which to build an account of reception. Such spaces play as determining a role in shaping

the audience's experience as the films and the qualities of the projection, these images tell us, as they endeavor to grasp the unique character and affordances of the black box theater. At the same time, what emerges across the photos is a running counterargument to the characterization of the movie theater as a machine for oblivion—or to put it differently, a qualification to this notion, in the sense that the viewer rendered "oblivious of self" can just as easily become oblivious to the film. If theater designers strove for an architecture of dematerialization and purified presence, inheriting from the nineteenth-century concert hall an aesthetic ideal of transcendence along with a modern political project of discipline, Weegee's photographs attest to—and celebrate—the shortcomings of this regulatory model. They present the movie theater less as a perfect viewing dispositive than as an undisciplined zone in which the unified orientation of the viewing collective is just as prone to unravel and dissipate. Within its walls, spectators can both come together and pull apart, uncompliant bodies occupy space in their particular fashion and for their own purposes, and the hum of social life persists despite the code of silence. Weegee's perspective aligns with the views of writers who have challenged the notion that the conditions of film exhibition automatically bring about a dampening of cinema's publicness in favor of isolation. He confirms Wolfgang Schivelbusch's insight that, notwithstanding the extinguishing powers of the darkened theater, the audience will not readily give up its social experience.[25] Indeed, the things that people do inside the movie theater are not so different from what they do in other urban spaces. The pleasures of cinema are coterminous with, not cut off from, a larger continuum of public leisure.

In setting forth a definition of movies as, above all, a *place*, "Movies Are Better" echoes a comment by Roland Barthes: "When I say cinema, I can't help think 'theater' more than 'film.'"[26] The position constructed by Weegee's photographs bears comparison with the standpoint of Barthes's essay "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater." Both inquire into the specific color of the theater's obscurity. Both proceed from a recognition that darkness acts upon the bodies assembled in this space not only as a force of erasure and dislocation, but also as a substance that solicits, envelops, and penetrates the spectator. Bringing his own practice of nocturnal literacy to bear on the scene of reception, Barthes discovers that the theater's darkness "touches me in a much more intimate way than the clarity of visual space."[27] If the absence of light operates as a constraint upon the audience's sight, it also offers them a remission from the gaze of others, hence a momentary release from the burden of being seen. Attuned to the ways that not just eyes but also bodies adjust to these conditions, Barthes takes note of how he and those around him respond with a "relaxation of postures." They do not take their seats so much as they "slip" into them, as if easing into a bed and drawing the darkness around them like a blanket.[28] The bodily lexicon of theatrical space described by Barthes finds a correlate in Weegee's presentation of the movie theater as a space in which "an inclination for idleness" takes over, and where self-monitored comportment devolves into relaxed

disportment.[29] Here, too, the filmgoers respond to the invitation of ease by hanging up their coats, propping up their feet, and sinking into their seats. Conspicuously unguarded in their facial expressions and bodily postures, they make themselves at home while being surrounded by strangers, discovering a reprieve from the public crowd even while remaining in its midst. In the images of filmgoers eating and smooching, slouching and sleeping, we encounter the most vivid evidence of the curious amalgam of privacy and publicity that Barthes identifies as the movie theater's unique property. And even if cinematic darkness provides the assurance of a cover, it nonetheless asserts a crucial difference from the enclosures of the domestic sphere. Peopled with other bodies, "anonymous, crowded," it retains the charge of the unfamiliar. In this tension between intimacy and anonymity resides the cinema's clandestine quality, its obscurity becoming "the color of a very diffuse eroticism."[30]

The diffuse eroticism named by Barthes takes root in "the idleness of bodies" that are unoccupied—which is to say, not in the aroused bodies of filmgoers busy at foreplay. To understand his view of cinematic reception, then, we should look to the most idle of the audience members captured by Weegee, the spectator who dozes off. This figure clearly held a special fascination for Weegee, surpassing even the voyeuristic appeal of kisses in the dark, as evidenced by the sheer number of such images he left behind. The shots of drowsy children from the matinee screening of "The Children's Hour" are recalled by the photograph in *Brief* of a young boy who dozes with his head leaning back on his seat, his body pushed to one side so that he can curl up his leg on the cushion. Multiple shots of this boy upon whom sleep lays the lightest of touches can be found in Weegee's archive, showing him from various angles and attesting to his intrigue for the photographer. Among them too are numerous images of other sleeping children that never appeared in print—a girl slumping down into her chair as if pulled by the weight of her unconscious body, a boy curling around himself in a semi-fetal fashion, a teenager who makes her rest more comfortable by propping up her feet on the seat in front of her. Bodies teeter off the axis of verticality in an endless variety of ways, composing an archive of spectatorial disorientations.

Weegee's slumbering spectators range in age from youth to teenagers to adults, speaking to the reach of sleep's seductions. The lack of self-consciousness expressed by young audiences in other ways is matched by the apparent ease with which they relax their limbs and surrender wakefulness. Turning to the adult filmgoers in this corpus, we encounter additional qualities of sleep and different degrees on the spectrum between fatigued deprivation and pleasurable excess. The lightness of posture in the boy pictured in *Brief* contrasts with the heaviness of the middle-aged woman whose photo is next to his. With her rumpled coat, crinkled paper bag, and slack jaw, she radiates a palpable exhaustion; for her, the theater is perhaps a much-needed respite as much as a diversion. Less burdened is the slumber of a male office worker, his tie neatly tucked and his fedora balanced on his lap,

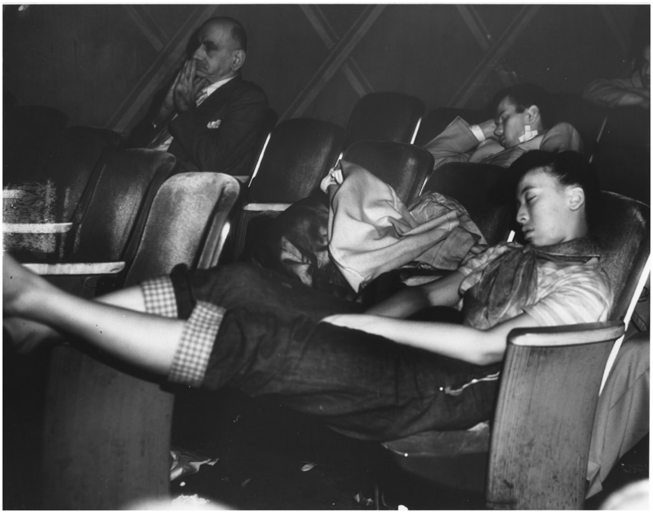


FIGURE 60. Sleeping at the Movies (Weegee, ca. 1943).

as if to carefully guard against any tell-tale signs of truancy. He maintains an air of composure even while stealing a nap—unlike the man in another of the *Brief* images who has completely let himself go, sprawled in an ungainly fashion across a row of seats. Another photograph, in contrast to the innocence of the sleeping children, has a seedier, even postcoital quality. Looking down from a balcony, the camera captures an unconscious man in worker's garb. His shirt disheveled, and his belt strap dangles loosely. The sleep pictured by Weegee comes in numerous varieties, wavelengths, and weights. It can be soft and floating, or leaden and profound. Its arrival exposes the postural inclinations of individual bodies, and sets into relief the physical traces of their relationship to work and rest, necessity and indulgence. It is an index of phases of spectatorship and the ways that time leaves its imprint on immobilized bodies.

This fixation on slumbering spectators at the movies is consistent with the leitmotif in Weegee's larger body of work of the tired body that takes relief wherever it may be had. Both of his books *Naked City* and *Weegee's People* devote entire sections to sleepers *en plein air* and in public—nodding off in their workplaces, bars, and nightclubs; crashed out on park benches and in cars; and huddling under storefronts with cardboard and newspapers as bedding. One of his most famous photos, taken in 1941 and reprinted in *Naked City*, shows a group of children curled up together on the fire escape of their Lower East Side tenement apartment on a hot summer night. Taken together, these images compose a portrait of sleep that pushes against social acceptability by dislocating it from the proper place to which it is assigned. In this shift from the unseen sanctuary of the private bedroom to the exposed spaces of public life, sleep becomes the image of the city at its most



FIGURE 61. Sleeping at the Movies (Weegee, ca. 1943).

naked and vulnerable. Viewed in these contexts, the act of sleeping is shadowed by implications of vagrancy, illicitness, and disorder. Weegee refers to the proscriptive forces that threaten to disturb these vagrant sleepers while also positioning himself as their ally, looking upon and watching over them: "So sleep on stranger . . . no one will bother you . . . not even the cops . . . Sunday is a good day for sleeping—so is any other day—when one is tired."[31] In *Weegee's People*, he even inserts himself among them: the book's frontispiece is a portrait of the author dozing on a park bench in Washington Square.[32] Across these images, the representation of sleep as a natural need shared by all bodies intertwines with the recognition of sleep as a resource that is unevenly distributed and differently accessed in a stratified society. For the unhoused, poor, and ethnic and racial minorities whose nocturnal existence Weegee documented, the guarantee of shelter is as precarious as the satisfaction of other material necessities.

Bringing this wider perspective on public sleeping into the spaces of filmic exhibition, Weegee's photographs remind their viewer that the movie theater endured as a haven for vagrants and loiterers—or at the very least, those for whom the price of admission was not an insurmountable barrier—as much as a magnet for cinephiles. In many ways, the evolution of film reception from the early period to the classical, from the cinema of attractions through the ages of the nickelodeon, picture palace, and neutralized modern theater, traces a trajectory defined by gentrification, the disciplining of the corpus of film viewers, and, as Miriam Hansen has argued, the "invention" of the spectator as a "potentially universal" and "ostensibly classless" consumer.[33] But just as Weegee's movie audience photos cut against the grain of a familiar iconography of the faceless moviegoing masses,

so they also display an attunement to illicit modes of reception that persist even despite the best efforts of cinema's producers, exhibitors, designers, and reformers. From the vantage point of those who take their rest wherever they can find it, the movie theater sells more than just a visual commodity or experience; it provides a temporary shelter.

The checked-out filmgoers that he brings to our notice call attention to an undeniable aspect of the movie theater as a commercial establishment that, in the words of John David Rhodes, "effectively sells very short-term leases (what we euphemistically call movie tickets) for very small parcels of real estate (movie seats)."[34] This aspect was also observed by Samuel Delany in his essay "Times Square Blue," an account of the West 42nd Street jungle at a later juncture that likewise offers a glimpse into the movie theater (in particular, the porn theaters that thrived in the 1970s) as a "humane and functional" public space, "fulfilling needs that most of our society does not yet know how to acknowledge."[35] Along with stories of sexual and social contact, Delany shares his recollection of an elderly homeless man who for many years lived "permanently" at one theater.[36] The status of the filmgoer as a leaseholder is typically eclipsed by their status as a viewer, engaged in a transaction centering on the film as a visual commodity. Nonetheless, it comes to the fore in certain circumstances, as demonstrated here, injecting into the history of filmgoing a revived awareness of differences of class. As an enterprise of short-term tenancy, the movie theater—and, especially, the all-night venues that Weegee frequented—sits on a continuum with the flophouses and hotels that he also photographed.[37] Even if the prohibitions against public sleeping on the streets apply equally inside, as we are reminded by the presence of the usher patrolling the aisle in the *Brief* spread, the darkness nonetheless harbors the possibility of escaping the eyes of authority, and the passivity of the captivated viewer might serve as a camouflage for other insensible states.

For Barthes as well, the cinema is a fine place to sleep or just to slouch along the slippery slope from which waking consciousness drops off. Setting off from his own movie experiences, he arrives at an account of reception that considers how a mood of indolence can readily detour the currents of attention to the point of decentering the film as its primary object. "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater" begins with the writer's apprehension of his languid state as he exits the cinema. Referring to himself in the third person, he writes, "His body has turned into something sopitive, soft, calm: limp as a sleepy cat."[38] Thus, Barthes joins his contemporaries Jean-Louis Baudry and Metz in singling out the special relationship between cinema and somnolence in this essay, which represents his own contribution to the 1975 issue of *Communications* on "Psychoanalysis and Cinema."[39] "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," like the essays alongside which it appeared, places the filmgoer within the ambit of sleep as well as a host of adjacent conditions such as hypnosis, vacancy, reverie, and dream. In contrast to these other discussions, however, it stops short of framing its observations within a regressive thesis that understands narcosis

to be the expression of an ideological relation to the apparatus defined by deception and confusion. Instead, Barthes disjoins the spell of ideology from the spaces of exhibition. Thinking further back, he identifies the beginnings of his mood of lethargy before he even steps foot inside the theater. It is not the hangover of the cinema's trance that Barthes detects, but rather "as though, before even entering the theater, the traditional prerequisites for hypnosis were met: a feeling of emptiness, idleness, inactivity." And just as hypnosis does not begin upon entering the dark theater, neither does it terminate with the exit into daylight. On leaving the movie theater one finds oneself in yet another cinema, "the Cinema of a society."[40] Who, asks Barthes, can fully escape ideology?

At other points in the essay, Barthes conspicuously refrains from placing the filmgoer on either side of a binary opposition between the murky consciousness of unreflective immersion and the illuminating clarity of a more resistant stance. Such a schema does not exhaust the range of orientations to the theater's darkness. In the midst of a situation that contrives by every available means to ensnare its audience, to "glue" their eyes and ears to the screen, Barthes discovers yet another stance, a means of unprying himself from the rectangle of light that also leads him toward "another way of going to the cinema."[41] To be sure, he concedes the efficacy of those filmmaking approaches that "loosen the glue's grip," awakening the viewers from hypnosis with an appeal to their critical faculties, as in the Brechtian alienation effect.[42] But Barthes does not want to break the somnolent spell or to unravel the "cinematographic cocoon" that it spins around him.[43] Sinking further into his drowsy haze, he finds that it generates a distancing effect of its own. It dislodges his identification with the film and returns him to his body, to his situation, and to the place he occupies in this tactile setting of sounds and textures, mingling with an "obscure mass of other bodies."[44] If a body can easily be lost or left behind in the depths of the movie theater, it can just as easily be found again, inhabited with newfound luxuriance. The black box is not a void, Barthes demonstrates, but rather a proximate space of corporeal qualities. In this darkness, I "shine" with the fortuitous discovery that I might even inhabit "two bodies at once"—a "narcissistic body" lost in its gaze and a "perverse body" caught up in that which exceeds the image.[45] The pleasures he takes from the cinema are not solely of a narcissistic order, deriving from a phantasmatic identification with the film, for they have to do with everything besides the image. He will not readily renounce these pleasures for the sake of knowledge and demystification; rather, he reasserts his claim to them in the name of amorousness and perversity. From his perspective, too, sleepiness marks the insistence of the body that occupies space in its own fashion and for its own purposes.

The problem of how to awaken the hypnotized spectator is therefore supplanted by a more intriguing and open-ended question, as articulated by Victor Burgin, of "whether somnolence itself may not be the spectator's best defence before the spectacle of the Law."[46] Within a milieu dominated by a theoretical definition of cinema

as "a perfect lure" capturing the consciousness of the viewer, Barthes expresses his dissent from such a definition by performing and recollecting a mode of distracted, disoriented, and deviant spectatorship.[47] For him the appeal of cinema resides less in the attributes of the filmic image than in the capacity of the theater to play host to a diffuse gaze, to a decentered and vagrant mode of attention, and to gratifications of a tactile nature. If these receptive dynamics elude programmatic control, they also prove evasive for the filmgoer who would place them under the harsh light of scrutiny—and all the more so for the theorists who, in striving for absolute presence of mind, force themselves into "a regime of maximal wakefulness."[48] The insights to which they lead are reserved for the dissipate filmgoer incarnated by Barthes and fleshed out with his own history of going to the movies, who is exposed to these dynamics in his torpor, prehypnotic reverie, and ensuing "state of great porosity."[49]

As demonstrated elsewhere in the pages of *Communications*, the prospect of sleep can trigger an alarm, warning of the dangers that follow from lapses into insensible states and sounding a call to action. Throughout the history of cinema, the figure of the sleepy spectator has served as an evocative signifier for an absorption so total that it leaves nothing of the audience behind. Closed eyes stand for a blindness that is indicative of the deceiving pleasure of visual mastery. The sleepy spectator is a specter lurking at the periphery of the audience's attentive gaze, the mirror image from which they avert their awareness. To confront this figure directly, to wage a battle against the cinematic trance "armed with the discourse of counter-ideology," would be tantamount to embarking upon an awakening with no end in sight.[50] For as Jacques Rancière has pointed out, the project of unmasking illusions is by its very nature an endless one.[51]

Conversely, to shift from a stance of active confrontation to passive surrender is to discover a way out of the bind of spectatorial attention by means of a fundamental reorientation. Effortlessly abiding rather than resisting his condition, Barthes makes himself open to the comings and goings of somnolence. Sinking into torpor, he finds himself swept up in the peculiar currents subtending its static surface. His unfocused drowsiness delivers him to a sensuous awareness of being absorbed in a particular kind of space; this atmospheric absorption runs counter to the pull of diegetic absorption, leading to his uncanny sense of having more than one body. Barthes's self-examination discloses the unsettled quality of the filmgoer's immobility, along with the extent of their passivity. (As Rancière observes, "This isn't a theory about the spectator's activity; it's a theory about the spectator's delicious, erotic passivity."[52]) Neither fully asleep nor awake, he hovers in a state of suspension, held in an unstable equilibrium between discrepant dynamics and crosscurrents. The effects of cinematic narcosis lead Barthes to the same place where Metz ultimately arrives—a sense of the filmgoer's radical impressionability as the result of a momentary and tenuous coexistence of what would otherwise be considered disparate regimes of consciousness. "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," like Metz's

"The Fiction Film and Its Spectator," paints a picture of the intrinsic volatility of spectatorship as a condition marked by ebbs and flows. Absorption is incomplete and permeable, defined by its fluctuations in time and its fraying edges.

The spectator who hovers at the edges of sleep is as much in danger of disconnecting from the projected image as from the physical environment. Nodding off, this spectator loses the thread of immersion and sets off along receptive pathways other than those ordained by the dispositive. Sleep breaks up the cinema's stranglehold on its audience by introducing divisions, intermittencies, and irregular rhythms that interrupt and divert the trajectory of absorption. Thus, it attests to the differences and residues that persist even despite the drive toward uniformity and totalization. In this regard, sleep focalizes a strand of thought that associates filmic reception with scattered, dispersive forms of attention that stray from aesthetic and disciplinary norms of absorption. It is such a mode of reception that Barthes performs and recollects, and that Weegee documents by means of photography. Their perspectives converge around the sleepy moviegoer whose deviance is exemplary, embodying simultaneously the model and counter-model of spectatorial attention.

10

Zoning Out

The sense that sleep can contribute something to the experience of moving images extends from the foregoing perspectives on the twentieth-century movie theater to contemporary cinema and a larger sphere of projection environments in the twenty-first century. Returning to the example of *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*—Apichatpong's 2018 film, installation, and temporary hotel—we discover the culmination of the filmmaker's ongoing investigation into the generative possibilities of somnolent spectatorship. During its exhibition at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, a stream of visitors meandered through the hall in which the piece was installed as they would in a regular gallery space. If they entered the exhibition not at ground level, but instead through another entrance opening onto a balcony overlooking the hall, they could perch themselves on one of the seats available there. Regarding the screen from this high-angle position, a viewer could have easily slid into the habitual immobility of the moviegoer and reverted to a familiar orientation with respect to the projected image. Indeed, many visitors sat in these seats for long periods of time, behaving as they would in one of the festival's more standard screening locations—while either ignoring the interlocking structure of elevated beds positioned in the middle of the hall and intruding upon their view of the screen, or simply accepting it as part of the visual field. But the full experience of this work required an overnight stay. In this regard, *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* can be described as a work deliberately designed to put its audience to sleep, addressed to viewers presumed to be physically present yet unconscious for a major portion of its running time.

Like so many thinkers before him, Apichatpong considers darkened rooms containing illuminated screens to be fine places in which to doze off, notwithstanding the other uses for which they are intended. Whether speaking of himself as a filmgoer or the reactions of others to his work, he refers to sleep as an integral dimension of the activity of viewing, a valid state in which to experience projected images and sounds, and even an outcome for which an artist might

deliberately strive. In *Flowers of Taipei* (Chinlin Hsieh, 2014), a documentary about the Taiwan New Cinema of the 1980s, Apichatpong reflects on the inspiration he draws from the filmmakers associated with the movement. He expresses his admiration in these terms: "When I watch a film by Hou Hsiao-hsien, Edward Yang, Tsai Ming-liang, I always fall asleep. Years later, my films put audiences to sleep. I think, maybe, there's a special power to these films that takes viewers to a different world, a different state of relaxation, where we can leave ourselves behind."[1] When introducing his own films in person, he habitually concludes by encouraging the audience to give in to their drowsy inclinations, ending with the phrase, "I hope you sleep with good dreams." The phrase has become a trademark sign-off, so closely identified with Apichatpong that a movie theater in Tokyo created a video of him speaking it for use as an in-house trailer. Repeated in various contexts, his words have acquired the status of a mantra, or a ritual benediction for the screening that calls upon the blessing of sleep.[2]

Apichatpong's comments can be taken as a sign of an exceptionally high degree of self-awareness, for his claim that "my films put audiences to sleep" is borne out by abundant evidence. During the process of writing this book, many people told me their stories of falling asleep during his films—not only on isolated occasions, but oftentimes repeatedly across multiple viewing attempts. These stories were often shared in a sheepishly confessional tone, as if indicative of a failure on the part of the speaker. Yet the filmmaker himself would be unlikely to construe them as such. In asserting that sleep is a fine state in which to encounter his films, Apichatpong rejects the mindset that ascribes drowsiness to a deficiency of stimulus, resulting in a boredom that reflects poorly on either the work that fails to sustain interest or the viewer who fails to meet the work's demands. His rejection of this logic finds support from other quarters. As many have long argued, boredom does not directly provoke the urge to sleep, as if the mere absence of something to hold my attention would be enough to send me toward unconsciousness. From a neurophysiological standpoint, boredom can only unmask preexisting sleepiness. And from a phenomenological standpoint, boredom is far from relaxing to experience, which is precisely what makes it unbearable. In Jan Linschoten's description, boredom brings about a state of tension as I seek vainly to find a future goal to which I can attach my attention and anticipation. In the failure to achieve this and thus to overcome my boredom, my aspiration persists, intensifies, and drives sleep away. "One is unable to sleep because of boredom," Linschoten argues, stuck instead in a state of empty arousal and restlessness.[3]

By inviting sleep in a mode of acceptance and reverence, Apichatpong dispels the aura of negativity in which conventional wisdom enshrouds this activity. He expands the terms of Anne Carson's encomium in her essay "Every Exit Is an Entrance (A Praise of Sleep)" by disclosing its reversibility. For Carson, sleep deserves the praise of the reader attuned to the ways of its reading. For Apichatpong, as much as sleep onscreen merits the appraising scrutiny of the viewer, it can

also be an offering of praise in and of itself. Thus, in *Flowers of Taipei*, he at once pays homage to an earlier generation of filmmakers and lays claim to an artistic kinship with them by way of somnolent spectatorship. Counterintuitive though it may be, this position on sleep is not a solitary one, as previous chapters show.

Sleep does not necessarily diminish the experience of a work, but can deepen the impact that it makes, strengthen its claim on the viewer's memory, and forge a more intimate bond. To contemplate these outcomes requires letting go of a narrow definition of reception in order to attend closely to those very responses that tend to be excluded by such a definition and that have been obscured by a long-standing emphasis on spectatorship as attentive absorption. Contained in the understanding that missing out on a portion of the work poses a problem for neither the filmmaker nor the viewer is an assumption that there is more than one way in which to take in a film. The apprehension of the work in its totality and with unwavering focus need not be prioritized over other dimensions of the reception process. Apichatpong, like the theorists discussed above, advances a view of spectatorship free from the shadow of the regressive thesis. To follow their prompt is to track the multiple itineraries that can break into and branch off from the film's singular spell, tangling together messily in the situation of viewing. This chapter charts a theoretical discourse of somnolent spectatorship, connecting *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* to writings by a host of artists and theorists, and building an account of reception as it extends into involuntary, inattentive, and unconscious zones. To recall Apichatpong's words, "Asleep, you become part of a different kind of cinema in the making."[4]

The role of sleep in moving-image reception constitutes a red thread throughout Apichatpong's productions. As much as thematic elaborations of somnolent states bridge his filmic and artistic practice, so his quest to directly elicit such states in the audience is indicative of his sustained dialogue with theories of narcotic reception. The persistence and systematicity with which he engages with sleep—in his discursive performances, feature films, experimental shorts, installations, and uncategorizable works like *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* and *Fever Room*—bring a particular pressure to bear upon normative models of spectatorship. The latter are taken apart, reassessed from a defamiliarized perspective, and reconfigured into other sensory-experiential possibilities. This chapter makes a case for Apichatpong's profound impact and intervention as not just a director and an artist, but also a theorist, for whom filmmaking constitutes but one facet of an ongoing inquiry into cinema that combines the concerns of history, technology, ontology, phenomenology, and politics. Apichatpong can be affiliated with an avant-garde lineage of figures who have defined, transformed, and recreated cinema through a theoretical-practical method—an unorthodox lineage to which Pavle Levi refers as a "cinema by other means."[5] In Apichatpong's case, this theoretical-practical method encompasses creative projects, exhibition strategies, written texts, and verbal statements offered mostly in the discursive format of the interview (as part

of the public performance of authorship typically demanded of directors). These statements might be brief, at times articulated in a casual or lapidary way; nonetheless, they are highly suggestive when read in light of his artistic production and broader critical debates. For this reason, my discussion draws extensively from Apichatpong's own words and places them in dialogue with more orthodox written forms of film theory.

Moreover, Apichatpong's reflections on narcotic reception relate the traditional movie theater to other spaces of moving-image exhibition, responding to and participating in the diffusion of cinema across the contemporary cultural landscape. Discussing the exhibition of *Primitive* at the New Museum in 2011, he says,

> I am fine when people say that they sleep through my movies. They wake up and can patch things up in their own way. This is what I want the installation audience to feel. It is not meant to be monumental but weightless. So many times I operate similarly when shooting a feature or a short piece, no matter how they will be shown. There is always an element of casualness and carelessness.[6]

When *Primitive* was displayed at Tate Modern in The Tanks, a subterranean gallery built from a former oil storage tank, the artist approvingly noted the similarity between the spaceship built by the Nabua teenagers, used by them as a place for sleeping and documented in the piece, and the cave-like installation space: "I hope that people will be relaxed enough to sleep inside the space."[7] In conjunction with this exhibition, the museum also organized an all-night program of Apichatpong's films. Viewers could enter the screening at any point between its starting time of 10 p.m. and conclusion at noon of the following day. Other venues have followed suit in taking him at his word and adopting a sleepover screening format. At an all-night screening of his work at the 2018 Glasgow Short Film Festival, the theater was even filled with mattresses and pillows for the audience.

In associating sleepiness with film's ability to transport the viewer to another world and a different state of mind, Apichatpong rehearses a familiar claim about the motionless voyage of cinema. At the same time, he ties these effects to particular modes of filmmaking. The "special power" to lull and relax the viewer that he finds in the films of Hou, Yang, and Tsai stems from an approach that prioritizes the observation of material realities, decelerates and pauses narrative momentum, and deprioritizes drama and causality. The question of how such an approach might affect the audience's response was broached in an interview conducted with Hou upon the release of *Flowers of Shanghai* (1998), a historical drama taking place in the brothels of the late Qing era. Asked if his aim was to make the audience feel as sedated as the opium-smoking characters in the film, Hou replies that this was not exactly his intent; nonetheless, he continues, the film can be likened to "a dream from which one is just awakening. I think that this idea is tied to my method of evoking time in film. I believe that in my films, one loses a sense of time; as in dreams, one is no longer able to measure the passage of time."[8] Here

Hou draws a parallel between the reaction of his audience and the disorientation that accompanies the transitions between sleeping and waking—moments which, in Linschoten's account, lose their "moment-character" and become suspended, tenuous in their links to a before and after. Linschoten writes, "If we do fall asleep we experience the time between being awake and sleeping as a timeless time, a suspended time."[9] This loss of a sense of time is a characteristic of not only *Flowers of Shanghai* but also Hou's other films—in particular, his acclaimed Taiwan Trilogy, which leads viewers along a twisting path through the characters' memories, daydreams, fabulations, states of intoxication, and confused awakenings.[10] These films, with their hypnotically drifting rhythms and nocturnal atmospheres, submerge the audience in a twilight zone of consciousness where it is easy to lose one's bearings.

Sedation can be attributed to certain stylistic approaches, following from films that deprive their viewers of the usual markers of narrative progression and plunge them into an unmeasurable flow of time. In a similar fashion, Apichatpong's feature films reject the conventions of causal linearity and dramatic progression. They proceed along a path that cannot be anticipated in advance, shaped by desultory turns and puzzling ellipses. His stories meander, twist, then suddenly break their frame and shift into a new series; or alternatively, they double back and repeat in a different register. *Tropical Malady* begins as a story about the budding romance between two men in a contemporary rural setting but, halfway through the film, a new set of credits and establishing intertitles launch a detour to another setting and metaphysical plane, where one of the men transforms into a tiger spirit who hunts the other. *Blissfully Yours* is likewise interrupted by an opening credit sequence that inexplicably arrives forty minutes after the film begins. The credits mark a transition from the setting of the city, in which the film's characters rush about in a determined hustle, to that of the jungle, a place where time dilates and action unwinds. In numerous other films, Apichatpong returns to the jungle as a location where, in his words, "any reference to time is removed."[11] In *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, the passage of time is marked by the sleep patterns of the characters as the setting alternates between night and day. But instead of conveying an orderly chronological progression, these circadian cycles generate a mood of temporal disorder. As in some of Hou's films, we find ourselves immersed in a half-light of consciousness, lingering in transitional zones that dissolve the distinctions between sleeping and waking, between dream and reality, between past and present lives.

The disintegration of the present's moment-character into an uncontrolled temporal flux is perhaps most vivid in *Mekong Hotel*. Three characters staying at a hotel on the banks of the Mekong River rehearse scenes from an imaginary horror film that features the flesh-eating ghosts of Thai folklore. In between their rehearsals of the film-within-the film, they hang out and watch the river flow by, or lounge and nap in their hotel rooms where, in soft voices heavy with sleep, they

share stories about their pasts. In these stories, their identities as actors merge with those of the characters they play, and their spirits disconnect from the physical here-and-now to commune on a cosmic plane of death, reincarnation, and afterlife. Lingering with the characters in this drowsy zone, the viewer might undergo a disorientation like that to which Hou refers, or even like that experienced by the narrator at the beginning of *In Search of Lost Time*. A shifting kaleidoscope of moments encircles their languorous bodies, as static images begin to vibrate with a sense of virtual multidirectional movement. Minutes condense a sleep of centuries; the transitions between sleeping and waking distill passages across cyclical lifetimes; time seems to expand, contract, and overflow its bounds, much like the river in the background. The sense of an immeasurable current of time is musically echoed by a single guitar that plays throughout the entirety of the film. Its gentle melody meanders and circles back without ever progressing to a resolution, thus blurring its endings into beginnings. The film's scenes, portraying variations on a triangle of filial love and romantic love, stand out like tenuous islands, or shards of lucidity, within this constantly flowing and increasingly hazy narcoleptic stream. In many of Apichatpong's films, but especially *Mekong Hotel*, the passage of time is extraordinarily difficult to track. One might leave the film feeling as I did—unsure if thirty minutes or several hours have gone by, and likewise uncertain whether the characters are the ages they appear to be or hundreds of years old.

The proposition that particular filmmaking approaches can engender distinctive spectatorial responses has gained a purchase on contemporary film discourse, especially in critical debates about the recent emergence of a cinema of slowness. Apichatpong, along with Hou and Tsai, frequently comes up in accounts of this cinema of slowness, which is defined in opposition to the accelerated rhythms and intensified continuity of popular commercial filmmaking. In contrast, the so-called slow cinema favors extended shot durations, silences, and inactivity. For its champions, the aesthetics of slowness offers a contemplative alternative to, and a haven from, the perceptual onslaughts of mainstream film culture, presenting viewers an opportunity to indulge in a freely wandering gaze that takes its time rather than being hurried along from one thing to the next. In Matthew Flanagan's influential formulation, to the extent that slowness can be considered "a unique formal and structural design" shared by an otherwise geographically, culturally, and stylistically diverse group of filmmakers, its cohesiveness derives from both a reliance on long takes and the perceptual-epistemological effects engendered by this reliance. By means of strategies of deceleration and reduction, he argues, slow cinema is that which "compels us to retreat from a culture of speed, modify our expectations of filmic narration and physically attune to a more deliberate rhythm."[12] Beyond an aesthetic retreat, slow cinema has even been construed as a form of resistance in the context of late capitalism's 24/7 regime. Within this regime, Jonathan Crary writes, "any act of viewing is layered with options of simultaneous and interruptive actions, choices, and feedback," captured by a technological "infrastructure

for continuous work and production," while conversely, "the idea of long blocks of time spent exclusively as a spectator is outmoded."[13] Yet this very idea lies at the heart of slow cinema, Tiago de Luca observes.[14] Thus, de Luca reads slowness in the way that Crary reads sleep—as a remission of capitalism's colonization of time and a "recovery of perceptual capacities that are disabled or disregarded during the day."[15] The virtues of slow cinema are staked upon a reparative claim to make whole again that which has been fragmented, to give back time that has been lost, and to "[restore] a sense of time and experience in a world short of both."[16]

Indeed, the viewers of slow films, who are drawn into what Flanagan calls "a relaxed form of panoramic perception," might very well undergo a languorous release of consciousness and find themselves at the edges of sleep.[17] This suggestion has been made by Abbas Kiarostami, another figure commonly aligned with slow cinema, while discussing his film *Five*, comprising five long, static takes of natural landscapes (e.g., driftwood buoyed by the waves of the Caspian Sea, a flock of ducks, and the moon's reflection on a pond). If some viewers are tempted to nap during *Five*, Kiarostami maintains, "I will not be annoyed at all. The important thing for me is how you feel once the film is finished, the relaxing feeling that you carry with you after the film ends . . . . I declare that you can nap during this film."[18] Justin Remes takes this to mean that "perhaps it is the spectator who struggles mightily to stay awake for the entire film who is missing something," while the spectator who surrenders to the urge to sleep has in fact "given herself/himself over to the work's soothing quiescence, its uneventful tranquility."[19] The prerogative to sleep ties in with a principle of spectatorial freedom, one that Kiarostami embraces (for both himself and for his audiences) as the antithesis of filmmaking modes that strive to "take their viewers hostage." As he puts it, "I do not believe in nailing the audience down at all." In a similar vein, Flanagan defines the aesthetic of slowness as "a deliberate retreat from *forceful representation*."[20]

To some extent, Apichatpong's encouragement of audience sleep parallels slow cinema's endeavor to recalibrate the viewer's perception and clear a pathway for thought in the absence of a predetermined perspective. With their long and lazy rhythms, his films often prompt critics to reach for adjectives such as tranquil, serene, and meditative. The director's description of how he engages his viewers resonates with Kiarostami's comments: "I want to give the audience the freedom to fly or to float, to just let their mind go here and there, to drift, like when we sit in a train, listen to a Walkman, and look at the landscape. It's liberating, and also the audience understands that they are not watching a routine three-act narrative."[21] The audience attitude envisioned by him calls to mind the relaxed panoramic perception of not just the train traveler looking out the window, but also the characters in *Mekong Hotel* patiently regarding the continuous scroll of the river. While the Mekong River features in several of his film and installation projects, Apichatpong also refers to the fluvial qualities of the images themselves as they carry the viewer away. Discussing the continuous all-night screening of his films at the

Glasgow Short Film Festival, he says, "I hope that at one point in the night, one doesn't need to interpret meanings but let the image and sound flow like a river. You cannot control it, just marvel."[22]

These connotations of mobility and flow, of physical and virtual movement, are folded together in *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*. The audiovisual component of the piece incorporates shots of waterways and waves, percolating clouds and foliage, and landscapes animated by the movement of the camera. While its sources range from actualities and phantom rides dating from the earliest years of cinema to satellite and drone imagery of more recent vintage, the overall effect of the composition is to evoke early cinema's captivation with the living world of movement, what the Lumière cameraman Félix Mesguich once described as "the dynamism of life, of nature and its manifestations."[23] The soundtrack contributes to a heightened awareness of the perpetual rustle of nature, dominated by sounds like the soughing of the wind in bamboo leaves and the rhythmic lapping of waves upon the shore. The movement of elements within the frame, the spatial passages of the camera, and the fluid progression from shot to shot all fuse together into a continuous stream, so that the audience is swept up in sensations of both moving through space and immersion within a dynamic surround. According to Apichatpong, "It's like a river, you just flow . . . the whole space is like a ship that floats into this river of images that you discover."[24] His nautical analogy is reinforced by the materials of the installation, which include netting like that found on ships and cotton scrims that can be raised and lowered like sails. The circular screen frames a defamiliarized perspective, not that of the conventional rectangular picture window, but one that resembles the porthole of a ship. Here the dispositive of cinema is reconfigured as a sailing vessel that launches the audience on a voyage. Their sleep, like the sleep of the characters in his films, implies the act of "making a journey somewhere."[25]

And yet despite the apparent kinship between the viewer of *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, gliding on the stream of images, and the viewer posited by the discourse of slow cinema, riding the currents of a liberated gaze, the two are set apart by notable differences. For Apichatpong proposes a reconceptualization of spectatorship that goes much further than the modes of perceptual recalibration commonly claimed on behalf of slow cinema, thereby exposing the limits of the latter's challenge to spectatorial norms. One of the key theoretical touchstones in accounts of slow cinema is André Bazin's essay "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema." Flanagan associates the directors of contemporary slow films with a tendency that Bazin identifies in this essay, wherein "the image is evaluated not according to what it adds to reality but what it reveals of it."[26] In deploying a filmic language that proceeds from a "respect for the continuity of dramatic space and, of course, of its duration," slow cinema also affirms how such an approach "affects the relationships of the minds of the spectators to the image."[27] For Bazin, respect for spatio-temporal continuity implies "a more active mental attitude on the part

of the spectator and a more positive contribution on his part to the action in progress . . . . It is from his attention and from his will that the meaning of the image in part derives."[28] What Bazin identifies as a means of giving back to the image its reality—in all of its ambiguity and indeterminacy—also entails a summoning of the attention, will, and choice of the filmgoer, resulting in a more active receptive stance. Writing on William Wyler, he emphasizes the subjective autonomy implied by this approach, which holds out to the audience "the freedom . . . to modify at each instant our method of selection, to select one aspect of the image over another according to our own inclinations and thoughts."[29] In the exercise of a sustained, searching, and self-directed gaze, the viewer chooses "of his own will" what to observe in the image (in Wyler's own words) and thus lays claim to the freedom to see in his own way.[30]

As Karl Schoonover observes, "For Bazin and many of his followers, the slower the shot and the greater the sense of unfettered, living duration, or *durée*, the greater the effort required of the spectator. This dilation of time encourages a more active and politically present viewing practice—an engagement commended for the intensity of its perception. *Seeing becomes a form of labor*."[31] Bearing out his argument is the distinction that Flanagan makes between fast and slow ways of seeing: "whereas speed perpetually risks gratuitous haste, fragmentation and distraction, reduction intensifies the spectator's gaze, awareness and response." Thus, while Flanagan starts off by painting a picture of a relaxed spectator who takes their time and indulges their gaze, his turn to Bazin complicates this picture. The viewer's activity comes to be shaped by a work ethic of spectatorship, imbued with another set of values: productivity, persistent effort, and unflagging focus. In this regard, the discourse of slow cinema restages a century-long "debate about whether a film spectator is actively or passively engaged," Schoonover writes, a debate now recast in terms of an opposition between "time wasted and time labored."[32]

The redemption of slowness by means of an appeal to the active labor of viewing is symptomatic of a tendency in the discourses around slow cinema to reinscribe entrenched dichotomies and hierarchies of quality, as scholars like Tina Kendall and Karen Redrobe have pointed out.[33] Just as slow films are held up as a more wholesome, intellectually nourishing alternative to the junk food of popular Hollywood, they note, so too does this division mobilize other sets of "rigid polarizations" that are ideologically overdetermined—between commercialization and art, between industry and artistry (defined primarily on the basis of a male-dominated pantheon of global auteurs), and "between passive consumption and active viewing."[34] Indeed, such dichotomies hold sway in the many other domains in which slowness has taken hold as a central paradigm of the early twenty-first century. Consider, for example, these excerpts from the influential Slow Media Manifesto, published in Germany in 2010: "Slow Media cannot be consumed casually, but provoke the full concentration of their users. As with the production of a good meal, which demands the full attention of all senses by the cook and his

guests, Slow Media can only be consumed with pleasure in focused alertness." And: "In Slow Media, the active Prosumer, inspired by his media usage to develop new ideas and take action, replaces the passive consumer."[35] Such ideas find a historical echo in critiques of modernity as an unsettling onslaught of fast-paced and discontinuous sensations, which threaten to overwhelm the senses and fracture understanding (which explains why these passages read like Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility" essay in reverse).[36] Reacting against this threat, the ethos of slowness turns to a familiar ideal, that of the active spectator, and advocates for a return to concentration as a privileged form of attention. This ethos is guided by a recuperative impulse to return to the viewing subject their proper share of agency and self-determination. It revives, in the words of Claire Bishop, a dusty "dream of full concentration and focused vision" as it endeavors "to recoup perceptual unity and subjective wholeness."[37]

In contrast, the receptive stance espoused by Apichatpong makes no claims on the viewers' maximal concentration, the concerted fullness of their senses, or the activation of their will. Casual by design, as he explicitly stipulates, this stance takes the promise of relaxation at its word. Instead of an intensification of attention, what he emphasizes is the slackening of the bridle of self-direction as the audience allows itself to "just flow" and let their minds "go here and there." The metaphor of flow implies the deactivation of certain dimensions of the viewer's response; likewise, his frequent recourse to tropes of weightlessness, floating, and flying places an emphasis on the suspension of effort. Spectatorship as Apichatpong conceives it is an experience marked by a quality of buoyancy, as if bobbing along on the stream of the film, potentially able to float away at any point, and neither locked into its rhythms nor immersed in its narrative. These dynamics call to mind Barthes's wordplay with the verb *décoller* in "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," unfolding its meanings of coming unglued, taking flight, and getting high.[38] Similarly, the viewer envisaged by Apichatpong zones out and peels away. As attention drifts and drowsiness takes over, the gaze is drained of its intensity. It slips, loses focus, becomes careless of the image. The viewer whom he evokes, like the limply feline filmgoer described by Barthes, is more passive than active, more languorous than laboring, more lax than alert. Sleep displaces the familiar ideal of the active spectator and introduces an entirely different notion of reception. Passivity is not to be reconverted into effortful concentration, but rather inhabited in its own right.

Turning to *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, we encounter a material framework in which to flesh out this receptive stance. For the most doggedly attentive of viewers —including those who arrive with pen, paper, and the objective of producing a thorough report—meet their match in this piece. To experience a full cycle of *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, and at a film festival no less, is to be drawn into a direct confrontation with one's own deep-seated spectatorial habits in a setting that is usually associated with the most rigorous protocols of attentive comportment. On

the one hand, the option of sitting still in the darkness and devoting oneself to concentrated study of the images and sounds was readily available, as I found during my own visit. On the other hand, I soon began to interrogate my tendency to default to this option, confronted with the impossibility of suppressing my awareness of the myriad other viewing modes that were equally available to visitors. Given how the features of the hall imposed upon my perceptual field rather than receding from view, these alternatives pressed constantly into my awareness. Any expectations of finding a position from which to scan the entirety of the image were thwarted by obstructions from nearly every angle—such as the edifice of beds raised between the screen and the seats, requiring the viewers on the balcony to watch the film through layers of mesh, scaffolding, furniture, and the silhouettes of any people who happened to be lounging on the beds. From the vantage point of the recumbent viewers, too, portions of the structure jutted into their sightlines toward the screen. Only in one spot—a low wooden platform generously sprinkled with cushions positioned directly underneath the screen in front of the beds—was it possible to enjoy a completely unobstructed view of the film.

Along with such architectural impediments to the pursuit of the perfect view, the extended running time of the piece also imposed insurmountable limits on a viewer's ability to sustain attention. The need to step out of the hall—for brief breaks as well as longer interludes occupied by social distractions and the search for nourishment—chipped away at my resolve to apply myself to the maximum of my endurance. Released into the sea of an entire night, I could not help but experience a displacement from such self-imposed disciplinary reflexes. Thus primed for the next phase of my visit, I retreated to my reserved bed on an elevated bunk reached by a ladder. There I entered a space that was arranged with an evident care for the tranquil slumber of the occupant. The darkness of this area of the hall, unbroken by a projector's beam (the digital projector was situated off to the side of the screen, its beam refracted by a mirror), reduced my self-consciousness of being in the sightlines of other people, while the generous allowance of space between the bunks also mitigated sensations of unwanted exposure. The coziness of the bed, made up with pillows and a fluffy cover, exerted its persuasive force—calling upon the supine body's inertia as the ally of a passive mode of receptivity, converting my would-be industriousness to indolence. Adding to the feeling of comfortable enclosure was the thick auditory presence of the soundtrack playing from multiple speakers positioned throughout the highly reverberant hall. The susurrant, lapping, and streaming sounds that filled the space and dampened the noises of other visitors were reminiscent of the white noise devices that promise to enhance the listener's sleep by wrapping them in a blanket of soothing sounds. Immersed in this wet acoustic bath of echoes, ensconced in a cocoon of light reflected on the walls and ceilings, I seemed to be inside the ultimate sleep machine. I was very content not to budge from my designated place until the next morning—as were the other guests, to judge from their reactions. Despite my insomniac tendencies and to my own surprise, I had an excellent night's sleep.



FIGURE 62. *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2018). International Film Festival Rotterdam. Photo by author.

As the evening progressed, images of sleeping figures appeared with greater frequency on the screen, as if to offer a mimetic cue to those of us in the audience. Lying in the dark and unable to resist the sensation of relaxation that spread over me, I began to drift off. Sleep did not come quickly in this unfamiliar setting, but in fits and starts across a protracted transition. I would close my eyes and start to lose myself and then, suddenly recollecting my curiosity, open them again. Even with eyes closed, I continued to see an afterimage of the screen, a glowing white orb burned into the back of my eyelids. The orb persisted in my unseeing vision, aggressively luminous, giving me the strange impression that the film was looking back at me. After an indeterminate period of watching the film in such intermittent snatches, I began to feel the blurriness that announces the imminent arrival of sleep. The afterimage of the screen was joined and then replaced by the pictures that formed in my head, taking shape of their own accord and forming a stepladder down into the well of unconsciousness. Remembered images from earlier in

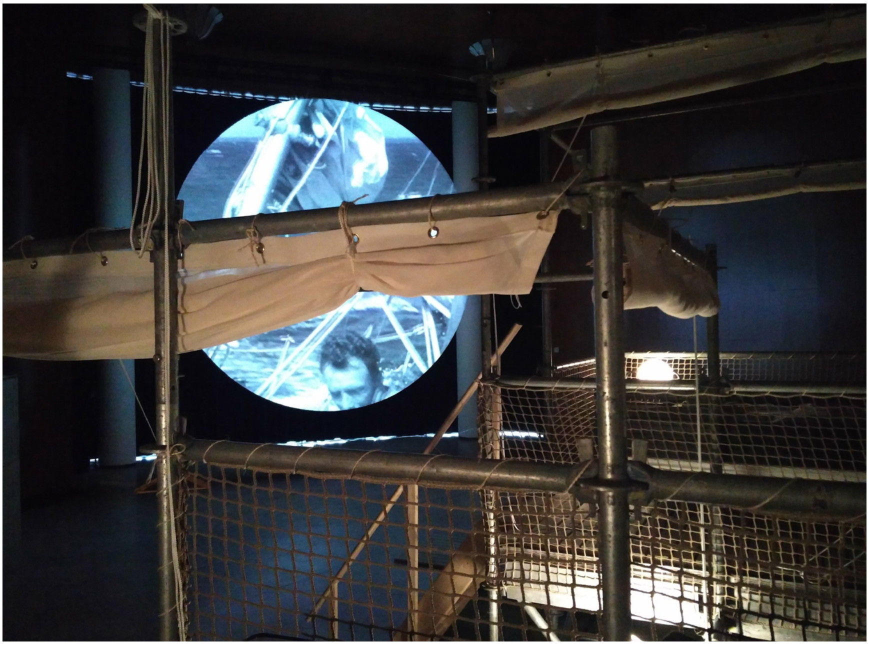


FIGURE 63. *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2018). International Film Festival Rotterdam. Photo by author.

the film appeared in this hypnagogic stream, while the phasing ambient sounds—of pouring rain and creaking doors—suggested new images. The recognition of these images and sounds formed the last of my semiconscious thoughts. Falling asleep, I finally gave in fully to the notion of *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* as a work not to be grasped in its totality.

In the middle of the night, I awoke to the image of a boat rocking on waters, shot from a position on the deck overlooking the bow. Reassured of the continuity of the journey of sleep, I reentered the waters. In the early morning hours, I opened my eyes to find a trick film playing on the screen. A child reading in his bed at night falls asleep, and the large window above his bed becomes a projection screen for his dreams. The boy climbs into a hot air balloon and takes off, then dives underwater and dances with jellyfish maidens. In my half-awake haze, I was all the more enchanted by the adventures of the dreaming child. In this figure I could dimly sense the reflection of myself in my present state, along with the echo of a familiar scene of early cinema in the current situation. This moment, with its allusion to a primal link between sleep and cinema, seemed to transmit an important message, one that could lead the audience to a recognition of their own sleep as an integral part of *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*. Despite this significance, though, it seemed to be lost on the others in the room, who by all indications were asleep at this precise instant when I happened to awaken. Accompanying the awareness

of my solitude in this moment was an inkling of the many other moments during which I would have been fast asleep while another member of the audience experienced a brief awakening of their own, accompanied by a different flash of insight in response to whatever was playing on the screen at that time. From the baseline of our communal slumber emerged countless image sequences to be experienced by individual viewers, a multitude of films seen and remembered by each one according to the unique timing of their own cycles of sleep. I went back under and entered an intense bout of REM sleep that lasted until morning, accompanied by vivid dreams that took their place alongside the images of the night. At breakfast (eggs, pastries, and at the filmmaker's request, sticky rice with mango), the other visitors and I talked about our dreams and recorded them in a notebook provided by Apichatpong. On the first page of the notebook was his handwritten description of his own dreams. The other pages were filled with the writings of the guests who preceded us. At the end of the run of *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, we were told, the book would be preserved, becoming another part of the work as the record of its collective undertaking.

The transitivity that Carson identifies in sleep—as an experience in which the doors of perception do not shut but rather revolve, every closing simultaneously an opening, every exit also an entrance—also structures the experience of *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*. At the same time that this work draws its audience into the fold of a common condition, it also scatters them to a myriad of individual trajectories, each constituted in a unique amalgamation of perceiving, not perceiving, and dreaming. Here it is the very capture of the body that enables the release of the mind to the dissipating, centrifugal effects of somnolence. In calling upon sleep as a force that immobilizes and pacifies its viewers for the course of an entire night, the work also carves out openings through which to zone out, or channels through which an entirely different set of visions can enter into play. In the very same gesture of making captive physically, *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* simultaneously abdicates its claim to the undivided attention of the audience. Its duration gives free rein to the flux of perception between conscious and unconscious states, between presence and absence of mind, rather than pinning the viewer to the heights of alertness.

The resulting experience calls to mind another passage from Bazin, describing not the long takes of Wyler but the longueurs of Charles Chaplin's *Limelight:*

> Even the boredom one might experience enters mysteriously into the harmony of the over-all work. In any case, what do we mean here by the word boredom? I have seen *Limelight* three times and I admit I was bored three times, not always in the same places. Also, I never wished for any shortening of this period of boredom. It was rather a relaxing of attention that left my mind half free to wander—a daydreaming about the images. There were also many occasions on which the feeling of length left me during the screening. The film, objectively speaking a long one (two hours and twenty minutes), and slow, caused a lot of people, myself included, to lose their sense of time.[39]

While a running time of two hours and twenty minutes hardly qualifies as long when juxtaposed with a work like *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, it is nonetheless enough to lead Bazin to an important recognition of how duration can foster a productively disjunctive form of spectatorship. The harmonious, agreeable boredom that he identifies with the film—not to be confused with a garden-variety boredom that induces tears—takes root in the gap that opens up between the viewer's mind and the images on the screen. As his attention becomes untethered from the film, Bazin's mind is freed to wander in this gap, to fill the space around the images with his reveries and, as he states later in the passage, to "embroider" the time of the film.

What Bazin describes here has a familiar ring, referring to a kind of spectatorial freedom. But what enters into play in *Limelight* is not the unrestricted exercise of choice, as in the case of Wyler's long takes, but rather mental processes of a more involuntary nature, such as daydreams and spontaneous associations. To this same category could be added the properly nocturnal dreams that come to the drowsing viewers of *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*. Indeed, perhaps the feeling of boredom that Bazin is at pains to precisely articulate lies on a continuum with the disorientation and defocalization that accompany the onset of sleep. His description recalls the language used by Hou to describe the soporific effects of his own filmmaking—"in my films, one loses a sense of time." Incidentally, this same language was used by one of the other visitors at *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, who told me over breakfast, "I lost all sense of time." The relaxed and wandering quality of attention noted by Bazin also finds an echo in Apichatpong's stated wish "to give the audience the freedom . . . to just let their mind go here and there." What Apichatpong explores by way of sleep is the proposal, broached here by Bazin, that the viewer's experience can be enhanced, and not diminished, by the lapses and wanings of their attentiveness. These can predicate provisional, capricious, and unpredictable ways of relating to the projected image and its setting. Somnolence, reverie, and distraction have something in common as inroads to a mode of reception defined by its departures and disconnections from the projected image. They converge at the point of a conception of deviant spectatorship, one that grants a vital role to the disjunctions between what the film shows and what the viewer perceives—or, recalling Apichatpong's comments, to the gaps that the audience is at liberty to patch up in their own way. By placing desynchronization and dissociation at the core of the cinema experience, this notion of deviant spectatorship unsettles fundamental suppositions about what it means to have watched a film.

Such ideas resonate with a larger set of critical discourses that break down and redraw the circuit of transmission between author, work, and audience. To begin with, they call to mind accounts of spectatorship that emphasize the intrinsic discontinuity of the projected image. Although undetectable by the human eye and occluded from awareness, the microseconds of blank screen that knit together a film constitute an undercurrent of nonseeing that shadows the act of viewing,

a gap between knowledge and perception. While some refer this intermittency to the repressed materiality of the filmic image, for Apichatpong the fascination of disjunctive spectatorship does not reside in its reflexive inscription of the projective apparatus or in an assertion of the specificity of celluloid film. Its roots are internal rather than externally materialized, attuned to a particular kind of seeing that thrives in conditions of darkness. For him, the sleepy spectator partakes of the "inward" vision that the filmmaker and theorist Alexander Kluge associates with the theater as a space in which the audiences spends roughly half of its time in the absence of illumination. At the movies, Kluge writes, "our eyes look at something outside for 1/48th of a second, and for 1/48th of a second they look inward. That is something very beautiful."[40]

Somnolence magnifies this inward look to the point of decentering the wide-eyed look at the screen, by activating what Apichatpong describes as "a special condition when you are allowed to connect with your inner images."[41] The onset of sleep, modulating by minute and gradual degrees the perceptual bond with reality, triggers the beginnings of a cleavage between the film's audiovisual flow and the filmgoer's flow of thoughts, such that they split into separate streams. "Sometimes you let your mind drift off, so there are double narratives going on," as he suggests. In conceiving reception as a scene of doubling—double narratives, or dual streams of images—he also strikes a chord with Kluge's notion of "the film in the viewer's head." Stimulated by the images onscreen, "the spectator begins to produce his or her own images . . . then there is a second film." For Kluge, this second film is the better film, to which the filmmaker must aspire to match in their efforts; "*this is the real film*."[42] On this point Apichatpong takes a similar position: "I've always believed that we possess the best cinema. We don't need the cinema of others. When we sleep, it's our own images that we see, and our own experiences at night. It's underrated—we just throw them away, but in fact each time we dream, it's a lot."[43]

A similar view of the projected film—as the seed for another, different film that ultimately defines the viewer's experience rather than being itself the central object of spectatorship—has been advanced by other filmmakers. In Victor Burgin's writings, this proposition takes the form of the "remembered film." Expanding the temporal perimeter of reception beyond the viewing of the work in real time to include a future in which moments and images are called up in memory, Burgin defines spectatorship as a process in which the totality of the finished film becomes undone by the memory that selects, seizes, and forgets. He understands his consciousness as a filmgoer to be informed by an ongoing interplay of film fragments within the nebulous reservoir of the "already seen."[44] Thus, he grounds the cinema experience in a fundamental disjunction: "Consciousnesses can be synchronized in a shared moment of viewing, but the film *we* saw is never the film *I* remember."[45] The film persists and is reanimated in the viewer's memory by means of its decomposition, dismantled into pieces that enter into association

with other memories and thus producing new "image sequences." These fragments "seem somehow more 'brilliant,'" he writes, charged with unconscious significations and condensed affects. In the expanded temporal framework constructed by Burgin, we can locate a harbor for a sleepy spectator who relinquishes their share in "the film *we* saw" while also redoubling their claim to the film they remember. Such a spectator, zoning out of and back into consciousness, perceives the film in discontinuous snatches that are all the more brilliant for their incompleteness, infused with a concentrated energy. In states of drowsiness and lassitude, Burgin suggests, a certain "hallucinatory vivacity of sensations" can set in.[46] If some images escape the drowsy gaze, then those that remain undergo a transformation.

Kiarostami alludes to a similar phenomenon when he says that the films that put him to sleep are the same films that exercise the strongest claim upon his memory, remaining afterwards in his thoughts "for weeks."[47] The notion of the film-as-fragment also figures centrally in the ideas of Raúl Ruiz, another filmmaker who welcomes sleep into the frame of spectatorship. "Every film is incomplete by nature," Ruiz writes, as the product of a series of interruptions—whether "between two shots, between two frames," or even "between two films zapped on television."[48] It is in the interstices formed by the film's "missing fragments" that the activity of spectatorship begins, for the role of the viewer is to "complete these fragments."[49] Ruiz situates this completed film on the plane of the conjectural, describing it in terms of a set of plural heterogeneous possibilities, many virtual possible films, that hover around the incomplete film. He likens these virtual possible films to airplanes flying around in search of a place to land and the actual incomplete film to the airport where the airplanes will ultimately land. In one sense, then, to watch a film, to complete its fragments, is to observe "the landing of the images and events," or the grounding of the virtual in what is really before one's eyes.[50]

The curious metaphor of the airplane recalls Barthes's framing of spectatorship in aerodynamic terms as an activity of lifting into flight and "taking off," which he specifies "in the aeronautic and the hallucinogenic sense of the term."[51] And indeed, Ruiz shifts his emphasis from the landing of the planes to their launching. For if we reach a point where "we begin to fall asleep, really or metaphorically [and] begin to lose the thread of the story," something else transpires. The airplanes no longer just land. Instead, at the same time, they also "take off" again and "fly up in every direction, now toward the film, now toward the viewer in search of his multiple private lives."[52] To introduce another metaphor, in Ruiz's first formulation, the film is a net of fragments in which the filmgoer's associations, memories, and imaginings find a place to lodge or land. In the second formulation, these associations, memories, and imaginings proliferate uncontrollably and break the net apart, spinning it out in new directions. As Ruiz puts it, "Now it appears that the images are taking off from the airport of ourselves, and flying toward the film we are seeing." Identifications run rampant, such that the viewer can no longer

distinguish between degrees of dramatic significance: "Suddenly we *are* all the characters of the film, all the objects, all the scenery." Images from the screen and images from the viewer's private lives collide and intermingle indiscriminately in the crowded airspace of reception. Ruiz's conception of spectatorship, like Burgin's, seeks out the mechanisms by which the film's original diegetic logic is scrambled, a new syntactic order imposes itself, and a different work takes shape. These mechanisms germinate in the sleepy spectator, whose exit becomes an entrance: "From this moment forth you are in another film."[53] To restate this argument in Apichatpong's words, the film on the screen becomes another film, whose making is enabled by sleep. This viewer, having passed through a "hypnotic point," is completely open to the associations that fly in and out of their own accord, no longer controlled by the command center of volitional thought.

Ruiz credits his discovery of these mechanisms to the insights gleaned from an experiment in self-induced narcolepsy. A few years ago, he writes, he took to "sleeping in the most disparate of places: in the street, while walking, beneath tables, during a meal, during a speech, or, of course, during a film." Thus training himself to perceive the waking world "from the perspective of dreams and oblivion," he develops a sense of the "'dreamed images' that are superimposed on the visible ones." Real life is like a film, he concludes, its "segments spliced together so as to produce the illusion of continuity."[54] The invisible connections can only be accessed in the realm of sleep, eluding the limited perspective of the waking mind. The displacement of this perspective unleashes a free play of images from both within and without, such that visible images activate dream images, setting off chain reactions that continue to ripple far beyond their originating source. To sleep Ruiz credits a more radically immersive experience of the film, one that begins when the narrative thread is broken and is propelled along by trains of thought that accelerate when the brakes of waking logic have been cut. Riding on their momentum, the viewer peels away, floats, flies, and breaks free from the gravitational force of the projected image.

Somnolent spectatorship exerts a disintegrating effect on the projected film, introducing interruptions that function like back doors through which a viewer can slip. While these effects have largely escaped film theorists fixated on the dangers of narcotic reception, they have been keenly grasped and articulated by filmmakers. As well as straddling the boundary between theory and practice, the figures cited here—Kiarostami, Kluge, Burgin, Ruiz, and Apichatpong—command recognition as auteurs, given their prominent standing in experimental and art cinema. It is ironic, then, that to insist on a role for sleep in cinema is to countermand strong claims for authorial control, privileging instead the disorganization of the forms devised by the filmmaker and the limits of their ability to orchestrate the audience's perceptions. The pendulum swings from the intentions of the author to the "unpredictable interplay of associations and disassociations" that characterize each and every audience member.[55] While sleep has at times been

invoked by other filmmakers as a sign of their dominance over the viewer—as in Jean Cocteau's assertion that the artist requires "an audience that is capable of submitting to collective hypnosis and of following his lead into sleep"[56]—here it points in a different direction. To promote somnolence to a central role in the cinema experience is to advance a definition of spectatorship founded on the gaps between the message and its receiver, calling into question what Jacques Rancière terms "the logic of straight, uniform transmission."[57] To sleep is to collaborate in the completion or realization of a work that is definitionally unfinished.

To conceive spectatorship in these terms is not to subscribe to a pedagogical mission of rousing the audience from its passive receptivity and reactivating its gaze. Even as Apichatpong solicits the contribution of the viewer's "own images," he makes no appeal to a viewing subject who exercises choice and volition. The receding figure of the author is not simply supplanted by a refashioned viewer who, in the process of learning to see anew, discovers an affirming reflection of their observational agency in the projected image. The "perceptual unity and subjective wholeness" (recalling Bishop) implicit in such a position do not characterize the somnolent spectator whose experience is ineluctably shaped by a surrender to involuntary processes that cast a shadow over perception and consciousness. The viewer who gives in to these processes is led to another discovery, that the brain is "the most amazing movie projector in the world." As Apichatpong maintains, while we do not know how to operate this apparatus, not having solved the mind's mysteries, we nonetheless call upon its powers in an "elementary and primitive" fashion every time we sleep.[58] *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* strives to activate this other interior cinema as an open-ended exhibitionary circuit that demands to be supplemented by the projector in the viewer's brain. Sleepy spectatorship reimagines the apparatus by way of a detour through the body, resulting in a curiously animate ontology of cinema—or what might be termed an *animistic* ontology, following May Adadol Ingawanij. With this phrase, Ingawanij refers to region- and site-specific cinema practices that set into motion crossings between the human and nonhuman, blurring "the distinction between inside and outside, self and other."[59] If animism refers to a conception of the porosity of the self and permeability between human and nonhuman, then this conception extends from Apichatpong's filmic representations to his remaking of cinema as a porous medium and of the space of exhibition as a zone of permeability.[60]

11

Circadian Cinemas

To consider somnolent spectators is to restore the textures of embodied particularity to the scene of reception, as the previous chapters argue. Such a consideration also lays the groundwork for a renewed understanding of moving-image reception as a public, social, and communal activity. Although these qualities were singled out as defining attributes of cinema from its early history, associated with its democratic promise as a popular medium, this promise was also thoroughly interwoven with anxiety, as the discourse of narcotic reception demonstrates. As so many have insisted, inside the movie theater, an experience in common takes shape only to the extent that the presence of others in the audience is extinguished for the sake of a one-to-one communion with the image. This commonality is forged paradoxically by means of depersonalization and the excision of intersubjective bonds. In order to become a part of the cinema's audience, one must leave behind some part of one's self or, in André Breton's striking formulation, must willingly "abstract" from one's own life.[1] And so we take our place among strangers as faceless as ourselves, deactivating our identities and fusing together into a single sense and subject position. This abstracted notion of spectatorship informs not only apparatus theory and theater design, but also historical accounts of the rise of cinema as a mass medium, as Miriam Hansen has pointed out. Writing about the latter in the American context, Hansen relates the construction of a solitary generic spectator starting in about 1910 to an emergent sense of the medium's capacity to overwrite social distinctions and submerge diverse identities within a universal mode of address and culture of consumption. She writes, "The concept of the spectator made it possible to precalculate and standardize individually and locally varying acts of reception, to ensure consumption across class, ethnic, and cultural boundaries."[2] Throughout the history of cinema, the question of watching with others—the same thing, at the same time, in the same place—has been shadowed by concerns about neutralization and homogenization, concerns deepened by cinema's institutional and industrial trajectories.

If the filmgoer's consciousness undergoes a reduction within the movie theater—"consciousness limited to a single sense," to repeat Jean Epstein's formulation—a parallel process of evacuation can be said to transpire from body to body. Cinema convenes an audience in order to drain away its social substance as an audience, it has been argued. Eyes without bodies find a correlate in the lonely crowd of spectators—gathered together in a place but solitarily and individually absorbed, held together not by virtue of person-to-person ties but rather by the gravitational pull of the screen. To turn to another one of Epstein's metaphors, "the sensibilities of the entire auditorium converge, as if in a funnel, toward the film."[3] The discourse of narcotic reception turns to sleep as an apt illustration of this vexed form of collectivity instantiated in the movie audience, simultaneously together and separated. For sleep at its heart describes a condition that is shared in common by all while still remaining fundamentally unshareable, one that we experience together but alone. Grasped in these very terms, however, sleep can also exert a counterpressure *against* such totalized and totalizing conceptions of the mass audience. It prompts a question about the relational potential obtaining within what seems or feels like solitude. How might a social rapport nonetheless take shape across individual instances of absorption, a rapport that, crucially, is not staked upon the consistency of an identical vision? To the extent that somnolent spectatorship calls attention to the embodied filmgoer as a locus of untranscendable differences and residues—restoring the "I" to the "we" of the movie audience—it simultaneously illuminates the peculiar characteristics of this we. As Victor Burgin suggests, only by confronting an audience that "sleeps together in . . . a *touching* space" can we begin to grasp the character of this audience as "a totally aleatory conglomeration of alterities."[4] In Hansen's formulation, the shared social horizon of cinema is constituted not solely as the fixed predicate of "the consumption of standardized products," but also as an effect of the entangled heterogeneities, aleatory relationships, and unanticipated exchanges that are negotiated within the public space of the theater.[5]

The unique perspective on the cinema experience afforded by sleep is also a timely one. For the question of what it means to be a part of the viewing collective forged by cinema becomes only more vexed as this experience outgrows the originary scene of the moviegoing public gathered before the big screen. The mass audience of old is remolded by the currents of spatial displacement and technological disruption, spinning out into manifold configurations of watching alone together or together alone. And indeed, today we might just as readily encounter somnolent spectators in other situations. Perhaps they will be discovered in the private setting of the home in front of a small screen, as in the very last of the series of digitally animated "frames" in Abbas Kiarostami's film *24 Frames* (2017). Its composition recalls the title shot from *Holy Motors*, placing a film and its viewer within a space of obscurity. A woman sits at a desk with her back to the camera, facing windows that open onto a twilight sky. She slumps forward asleep on her



FIGURE 64. *24 Frames* (Abbas Kiarostami, 2017).

desk, allowing us a clear view of the glowing computer screen before her on which the final scene from William Wyler's *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946)—the close-up of the kiss between Teresa Wright and Dana Andrews—plays frame by frame as it is rendered by a video editing program, until the words "The End" appear. Like its counterpart in *Holy Motors*, the scene refers nostalgically to an earlier era of cinema, embodied in this classical Hollywood picture that hovers at the precise center of the composition like a transmission from another time, out of sync with everything that surrounds it in its slow-motion stagger and affective vibrancy, the most animate element in this still composition. The historical distance separating this era from the present is further marked by the digital technology that renders and remediates the filmic image; by the shifts in scale transpiring as the framed view migrates from screen to window to the computational interface that functions as a proxy for both, while also shifting the locus of display from sites of leisure to the workstation; and by this unconscious viewer who sleeps alone rather than in the company of others.

As well as doubling the sense of an ending (of both *24 Frames* itself and *The Best Years of Our Lives* as the film-within-the-film), the scene suggests the fading away of a shared public experience of spectatorship, echoing a by now familiar story of shrinkage and fragmentation in the age of disseminated playback.[6] The figure dozing in front of the computer recalls not only the actual and hypothetical sleepy moviegoers discussed in the previous chapters, but another familiar persona in the long history of narcotic reception. Prompted by either personal experience or the cultural imaginary, we might envision the television viewer passed out on a sofa who, like the character in *24 Frames*, has been lulled by the familiar sounds and images of old movies whose endings are already known. A bleakly humorous

portrait of the zoned-out television viewer that also makes reference to the rituals of movie watching, in a dark parody of cinephilia, comes from Ottessa Moshfegh's 2018 novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*.[7] The book's narrator, a bereaved woman who decides to spend an entire year in deep hibernation, goes about this mission with the aid of an antiquated VCR, a stack of VHS tapes from the 1980s and 1990s, and a battery of prescription-strength sedatives. She watches, rewinds, and repeatedly rewatches *Working Girl, The World According to Garp, Moonlight and Valentino*, etc., while gulping down handfuls of Ativan, Ambien, and Nembutal. The sleepy spectator gains ground on the broadening terrain of moving-image display rather than losing traction. New modes of narcotic reception proliferate.

It is no coincidence that at this moment, many have begun to reassess the implications of silent, static viewing in darkened rooms.[8] From the vantage point of an era in which privatized, atomized viewing is par for the course, the theater beckons as an idealized memory and "a lost site of relationality," to quote Erika Balsom.[9] As the clouds of obsolescence gather, the anticipation of imminent loss is sparked, which in turn galvanizes a current of nostalgic preservationism. The lament of "the end of cinema" that has gained in amplitude at the turn of this century fixates on the irretrievability of cinema as it was once experienced. Consequently, the suspicious view of the black box theater as a machine that disciplines and disconnects its occupants gives way to a reattachment to this same space as a vanishing horizon of sociality. This nostalgic reattachment runs the risk of obscuring the intertwined histories of the atomized collective and the movie theater, and of unreflectively retrenching the receptive norms inculcated in this space. To react to changes in cinema by mourning the theater as we once knew it—as the only haven in which a collective, concentrated viewing experience remains tenuously available—is to fall back on a single model of spectatorship that has long served as "the normative anchor of our entire thinking about viewership," as Lutz Koepnick writes. Moreover, it is to fall back on old norms and definitions precisely when new models are required "to theorize today's exploded landscapes of cinema and spectatorship."[10] The consideration of sleep answers to a need to reexamine spectatorship at a moment when cinema is being reconstituted by new technologies of circulation and display, strategies and sites of exhibition, and networks of reception. The proposition explored in the preceding chapters—that sleep can productively and radically recast the web of involvement between the moving image, its viewers, and the place where they meet—bears upon the rethinking of reception demanded by the present moment. As much as sleep discloses previously unglimpsed dimensions of the theatrical experience that was once synonymous with cinema, it also offers lessons for a time when moving-image display exceeds the confines of the theater by reopening the question of cinema's "communal imaginary" and potential.[11] To discover the routes through which cinema might evolve and survive, to discern what we can hope to preserve of cinema as a perceptual and social

experience, what is first required is a better grasp of this potential, without recourse to reified ontologies or atrophied notions of reception.

A growing body of scholarship contributes to this endeavor by excavating cinematic genealogies that extend beyond the standardized settings of commercial theatrical exhibition toward different parts of the world and other locales, such as the factory, classroom, prison, museum, and the outdoors.[12] The project of "mapping cinema's long and variegated genealogical routes," in the words of May Adadol Ingawanij, generates a more comprehensive picture of cinema as "bodily encounters with mediated images and sounds within a spatio-temporal ambiance."[13] With this striking formulation, Ingawanij intervenes in the theorization of cinema as a dispositive. To the extent that cinema is a technical dispositive with a recursive capacity, it is above all contingent and malleable, amenable to improvisatory remaking by marginalized agencies and adjustable to manifold circumstances. Rather than a fixed apparatus or a permanently binding structure, cinema was and remains "an ensemble of projected moving image, sound, spatial, spectatorial and symbolic practices, whose composition at distinct periods and in specific locations is provisional and adaptive."[14] The countless varying iterations that constitute a larger history of moving-image projection can be read as "formative precursors to this current situation of saturation and ubiquity."[15] Furthermore, these variegated genealogies contribute a vital perspective on the present situation in the form of a counter-ontology that registers the dynamic range of the cinematic ensemble and thus bridges the divide between its past and present.

In his book *The Lumière Galaxy*, Francesco Casetti argues that the mutations of cinema both permeate its entire history and carve a path for its continuing future existence. When we look back to the past, it quickly becomes apparent that cinema "has always been a much more adaptable machine than we have often been led to believe."[16] And when technological changes build to a head—when cinema seems poised to turn into something else altogether, that can no longer be recognized as such—it is all the more urgent to come to grips with the dialectic of mutation and survival, to grapple with the tension between cinema's transformations and its persistence by way of these very transformations.[17] If the survival of cinema can no longer be staked upon a specific set of technologies, a type of environment, or even a stable attentional-corporeal attitude, then the locus of inquiry must shift to other domains. As Casetti writes, cinema endures as an experience—or even more subtly, as *a need for experience*—poised delicately between continuity and change.[18] This experience exceeds a spectator's confrontation with projected images and sounds, he writes, for it also encompasses a way of relating to a place, to others, and to the world.[19] Or as Balsom puts it, "Far more than just a support for an incandescent image, the screen is a nucleus around which a complex aggregate of practices, affects, and relations condense. As screen culture changes, so do these notions, making their examination all the more vital."[20]

Proceeding from the basis of sleep, we have arrived at an expanded sense of what it means to experience moving images as part of an audience. The singular notion of watching a film splinters into a multiplicity of possible modes of involvement and participation, all entailing varying degrees of attention to the projected image. In this respect, somnolent spectatorship reveals cinema to be a malleable system and provisional ensemble. The moviegoer who zones in and out aptly illustrates the way that spectators figure within the exhibitionary process as a "dynamic element" rather than a predetermined subject effect. As Casetti argues, if the viewer is absorbed as a constitutive element of the dispositive that contributes to its equilibrium and guarantees its functioning, at the same time they hold it open to a wider "horizon of possibility."[21] That is, the viewer marks a point at which everything either comes together or, potentially, breaks apart and enters into new recombinations. While Casetti writes in mind of viewers who actively "intervene upon the object of their vision" and the exhibitionary situation—who perform actions "to make their own viewing possible"—the claim applies just as well to those who intervene in a more passive mode.[22] The sleepy spectator lends support to a definition of cinema as an *assemblage*, capable of being "repeatedly re-formed under the pressures of circumstance," rather than an apparatus that has been "pre-arranged once and for all."[23] This dispositive is not a closed and static system, but one that is flexible and continually remodulated by the rhythms of the bodies it contains. Sleep thus serves as a valuable resource for building capacious models of encounter, contact, and engagement between viewers and moving images that are adequate to the contemporary mutations of cinema. And this accounts for why filmmakers like Tsai and Apichatpong combine the exploration of new cinematic experiences beyond the movie theater with the appeal to sleep in the form of a reimagined, reassembled circadian cinema.

Another exhibit of somnolent spectatorship: the setting is a large exhibition hall with numerous projected images lining its walls and many viewers reclining in its dim interior. The multichannel projections are typical of the installation formats adopted by museums and galleries—although, in contrast to the standard look of the white cube, this space has an unpolished, industrial, and slightly derelict quality. The ceiling is lined with a metal grid, the room empty of objects except for an enormous tangle of dried branches, and the floor packed with bodies up to the edges of the walls, some awake but mostly unconscious, crashed out in a convivial disarray and colorful patchwork of sleeping bags and blankets. In one corner, a viewer sits on the floor watching the projection, solitary in his wakefulness and hemmed in on all sides by a sea of sleepers. The branches cast shadows onto the screen he regards. In other areas of the exhibition, sleepers huddle together in smaller rooms, or wedge themselves into narrow corridors, sometimes with the light from the projectors washing over them and making them a part of the image.



FIGURE 65. *Stray Dogs at the Museum* (Tsai Ming-liang, 2013). Photo by Chang Jhong-Yuan. Courtesy of Museum of National Taipei University of Education and Homegreen Films.



FIGURE 66. *Stray Dogs at the Museum* (Tsai Ming-liang, 2013). Photo by Chang Jhong-Yuan. Courtesy of Museum of National Taipei University of Education and Homegreen Films.

The images projected on the walls are scenes from Tsai's 2013 feature film *Stray Dogs*, and the site of the exhibition is the Museum of National Taipei University of Education in Taiwan, where Tsai recreated his film as a solo exhibition in 2014, entitled *Stray Dogs at the Museum*. Along with daily screenings of *Stray Dogs* in its entirety and a series of live events, the exhibition included audiovisual installations created from takes and outtakes from the film displayed on the museum's three

floors. Tsai has described the process of building the exhibition as one of "disassembly and reassembly," extracting individual scenes to isolate them as independent short videos projected on each channel and, in some instances, restoring the entire length of takes that were edited down in the original film.[24] Chronologically deconstructed in this fashion, *Stray Dogs* undergoes a durational expansion along with a spatial detonation. The film is transformed into a "crystal," in Tsai's words—expanded beyond the fixed confines of the single frame, its components scattering, reflecting, and refracting across the museum's material surfaces. The projections were trained upon not only mounted screens but also walls, corners, the reflective steel doors of an elevator, a wrinkled paper screen rescued from one of Tsai's stage productions, and the bodies of visitors. Along with this profusion of images and sounds, the exhibition offered its visitors a variety of viewing options. They could arrange themselves on folding chairs and benches, or mattresses and other less conventional props. The floor of one of the rooms was strewn with pillows resembling cabbages (handmade by students from the University of Education), encouraging the audience to make themselves comfortable while also referring to a head of cabbage that actor Lee Kang-sheng smooches and devours in one of the film's unforgettable scenes. The situations of communal slumber described above took place over the course of several evenings when the museum remained open to visitors for the entire night at the request of the filmmaker, making *Stray Dogs at the Museum* into an exhibition to occupy as much as to see. Performances by musicians and "storytelling" by the filmmaker continued late into the night. Afterwards, those gathered (including Tsai himself) went to sleep inside the museum.

The remaking of *Stray Dogs* as an exhibition prompted experimentation with both the material forms of projection and unusual modes of reception, exploring ways of experiencing moving images and sounds that become available in a new setting. Tsai has pursued this line of exploration in other settings even more removed from the typical spaces of moving-image display, like the Zhuangwei Sand Dune Visitor Center, an ecological park in Taiwan that was inaugurated in 2018 with an installation designed by him, an exhibition of the films in his Walker series (including the latest addition to the series, *Sand*, shot on the black sand beaches of the ecological park), and a related series of overnight events. Such experimentation is mirrored in *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, a work similarly poised between cinema and installation. Like *Stray Dogs at the Museum, SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* incorporated a multiform exhibitionary platform, as described in the previous chapter, including open spaces in which viewers could circulate on foot, fixed seating like that found in a traditional theater, and supports of a more lateral kind such as cushions and beds. As both projects demonstrate, with the exit from the movie theater to other settings, a fixed and standardized architecture of reception gives way to flexible and configurable spaces, one in which the audience might discover a variety of ways to orient themselves to the image. With this exit, moreover, the time of projection is uprooted from the unremitting turnover of the

commercial screening schedule. It assumes a more elastic form that can shrink or expand, even to the point of absorbing the transitions from day to night and back again.

Stray Dogs at the Museum and *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* exemplify the rise in recent decades of moving-image and sound displays that more or less reconstruct the cinematic dispositive in museums, galleries, and other spaces. They relate to what has been termed the "gallery film," the "other cinema," or, in Balsom's phrase, "cinema beyond cinema," describing moving-image installations by filmmakers and artists for nontheatrical spaces.[25] Tsai and Apichatpong are notable contributors to this phenomenon. Among the many things the two share in common—beyond their prominent global standing and filmmaking aesthetic—is the fluidity with which they move between the film industry and the contemporary art world. Both have built a corpus of work that extends from feature films to experimental shorts to audiovisual installations that can only be experienced in spaces of art exhibition. And both can attest to the embrace of the film director by institutions of art in recent years. Their films are frequently screened by museums, such as Tate Modern, which has presented programs of shorts by both directors in the last decade. A retrospective of Apichatpong's films was programmed at the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco in 2016 as the inaugural event in their Modern Cinema series. In 2020, retrospectives of Tsai's films were scheduled at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art in Washington, DC (both canceled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic). Like Apichatpong, Tsai has been commissioned to create moving-image installations for art venues, including the National Palace Museum in Taipei and the Venice Biennale; his film *Face* (*Visage*, 2009) bears the unique status of a feature film commissioned and coproduced by the Louvre. The remaking of *Stray Dogs* as a site-specific exhibition continues this pattern of institutional collaboration.[26]

Tsai considers such migrations of his practice as vital for not only his efforts to reach an audience, but also the very survival of the endangered medium of cinema. "It sounds like a contradiction, but movies need to leave today's theaters to be resurrected," he states.[27] The contradiction embedded in his statement finds an echo in the director's career trajectory. After announcing his retirement from filmmaking in 2013 at the Venice International Film Festival, where *Stray Dogs* received the Grand Jury Prize, he entered a period of intense productivity, making short films for web distribution such as *No No Sleep*, experimental documentaries like *Afternoon* (2015) and *Your Face* (2018), and VR films like *The Deserted* (2017)—bearing out the idea that withdrawing or taking leave might be a strategy of perseverance and continuation. Tsai's comment, from a 2010 interview, anticipates a claim made by Casetti a few years later, that "it is precisely this *relocation* of the experience that allows cinema to survive."[28] Apichatpong has expressed a similar view while comparing cinema to one of the beings in his films, entities that do not die but rather reincarnate in new forms. Just as the phantom will never

disappear, continually transforming itself, so "cinema also has been transforming itself," he observes, undergoing its own process of resurrection and reincarnation.[29] "I attempt to transform cinema by taking it outside of the theater," says Apichatpong.[30] Leaving the theater, the moving image discovers another life in other environments and in reconfigured formations. In the cinema beyond cinema, Balsom writes, the medium becomes "other to itself," the stabilized structure in which its components adhered breaking apart, such that it shatters "into a multiplicity of attributes that separate, recombine, mutate, and enter into aggregate formations with other media."[31] In the creation of a reimagined circadian cinema, the resurrection of cinema is staked upon an appeal to somnolence, thus also breathing new life into a familiar figure from the history of narcotic reception.

Stray Dogs at the Museum and *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* call to mind a recent phenomenon that Pamela Lee terms "lying in the gallery," referring to the recurrence of cushions, beanbags, sleeping bags, and other horizontal platforms in contemporary art spaces.[32] Such arrangements often appear in combination with video installation as an integral component of the work, as in the example of Korakrit Arunanondchai and Alex Gvojic's *There's a word I'm trying to remember, for a feeling I'm about to have (a distracted path toward extinction)* (2016), which enjoins its viewers to sprawl on giant custom-made beanbags. Along with this increasingly common reclining format, *Stray Dogs at the Museum* and *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* also partake of the marathon lengths that have become something of a blockbuster trademark in cinematically inspired installation art. For instance, *24 Hour Psycho* (Douglas Gordon, 1993) and *The Clock* (Christian Marclay, 2010) have prompted some venues to organize around-the-clock viewings that push the very premise of opening hours to a self-canceling extreme. Such ultra-long works surpass the capacity or desire of the majority of viewers to sustain their attention—and when exhibited alongside valuable art objects requiring oversight, also strain the limits of a humane working schedule for museum employees. Their display comes with the requirement of night shifts, imposing upon museum guards the schedule of the shift workers who bear the brunt of adjustment to economies untethered from the limits of the body. In this regard, the exhibition and viewing of twenty-four-hour installations conform with 24/7 as a regime of "continuous work and consumption," recalling Jonathan Crary, without breaks and indifferent to the need for rest. Indeed, as Lee observes, *There's a word I'm trying to remember* and similar works do not generate relaxation or even a minimal degree of comfort. Despite their recourse to the domestic accoutrements of lounging and leisure, they reflect a condition not of idleness but of work—and specifically, a contemporary "technics" that renders the place of work as ubiquitous as the computational networks that constitute its infrastructure, such that the "work-*place*" becomes "flattened, rendered horizontal, everywhere."[33] Lying in the gallery is part and parcel of a late capitalist 24/7 order that overrides the divisions between labor and leisure, exhausts free time, capitalizes horizontality as "*productive* space," and hastens the end of sleep.[34]

If twenty-four-hour installations register a prevalent regime of labor—and of looking as laborious and belaboring—they also reveal the limits and contradictions of this regime. Taken to such lengths, the time of the work dissolves into a time of indifference, signaling the wholesale abandonment of any expectation of beginning-to-end viewing. For this reason, their durational extremity can be read as a harbinger of the final conquest of the coherence of the time-based work by the fractured and mobile glance that now constitutes the inescapable condition of the contemporary viewer. In recent debates about spectatorship, the contrast between this desultory unbounded glance and the traditional perspective of the seated filmgoer, who is locked into one position in space and a prescribed duration of time, has frequently been marshaled in a manner that resuscitates familiar attentional hierarchies. On the one hand, some have celebrated the exit of the moving image from the theater as a liberation of the viewer from their stupor, affording them a newly mobilized, self-directed posture.[35] The passive filmgoer is held up as the negative counterpart of the active gallery viewer. On the other hand, others draw a parallel between the viewing formats of the gallery and dominant modes of visual consumption, both offering the visitor a menu of options to sample and navigate at will—like a window shopper strolling the streets or the user of screen-based media scrolling through an endless array of windows.[36] Considered from this angle, the movie theater comes to embody a refuge for temporal coherence, a sanctum for perceptual unity amid a dominant culture of ubiquitous distraction, and one of the few remaining places where viewers can access an active (rather than merely reactive) mode of "sustained perceptual engagement."[37] Uniting these opposing readings is a recruitment of well-worn binaries—active versus passive, concentration versus distraction—in the effort to map the temporal and spatial displacements of the moving-image experience.

Koepnick points out that, as processes of migration and mutation continue apace, less and less "does it make sense to consider a viewer's sense of fixity or mobility, or distracted or contemplative viewing, as an automatic key to a work's meaning and politics."[38] The old schemas fail to impose a clear order upon a landscape of changing practices and uprooted encounters. Indeed, Tsai and Apichatpong's reimagined circadian cinema drives home this point. It neither stages the extinction of cinema, transforming the audience's experience into something that can no longer be recognized as part of the latter's history, nor seeks to restore cinema to its original condition. While temporal linearity does not wholly set the terms of the viewer's perceptual experience, neither do these works entirely divest from duration as a way of structuring this experience. *Stray Dogs at the Museum* and *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* immobilize their audience and install them within a duration of viewing by methods even more extreme than those available within the traditional auditorium. It is precisely by leaving the movie theater that Tsai and Apichatpong realize even more radically the idea of a machine for oblivion, literalizing the metaphor of cinema as a cave of sleep and dreams. But at the same

time, their goal is not to improve on the theater as a dispositive for the capture of the spectator's complete attention, thereby fulfilling an ideal of total absorption and perceptual unity that was only ever partially attainable in the film theater. Even as *Stray Dogs at the Museum* and *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* extract from their audience a commitment to stay for the long haul, they simultaneously relinquish any claim to its undivided attention and release it from the expectation of continuous looking and listening. And rather than recasting a 24/7 technics of work in the domain of exhibition, reconstituting reception in accordance with the nonstop "functionalities of non-human apparatuses and networks," these projects stage the interruption of such functionalities by the body's biorhythms.[39] Besides a posture of flatness, the experience of these works takes shape in a temporal frame that amplifies the tensions between continuity and discontinuity, laboring and letting go, attention and inattention.

Paradoxically, this circadian cinema breaks the spell of absorption by means of the very techniques long relied upon to consolidate this spell. Beckoning the viewers' bodies to a comfortably supine position and lulling them into inertia, it brings them to the point described by Christian Metz of a slippage of consciousness, in which the spectator's orientation breeds peculiar states of disorientation. The recumbent audience, reminded even more of the darkness of the bedroom, will likely find the onset of narcosis all the harder to resist. Or if physical ease does not suffice, additional reinforcement comes from the passage of time. While the latter has always conspired against the filmgoer's restlessness, enabling gravity and darkness to weave their cocoon around the body, the circadian cinema extends into the nocturnal hours when drowsiness readily comes to the aid of languor. *Stray Dogs at the Museum* and *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* fold cycles of sleeping, dreaming, and waking into the experience of reception. Besides the durational ambitions of the blockbuster installation, they evoke a history of overnight film exhibition that ranges from the all-night Times Square movie theaters frequented by Weegee to the outdoor screenings that brought movies to rural audiences located afield of the networks of theatrical exhibition throughout East and Southeast Asia. Being open to the air, such screenings began with the setting of the sun and proceeded through the night. Ingawanij has described the "durational expansiveness" of Thailand's itinerant makeshift open-air cinema—beginning with the wait for darkness, extending into the early hours, and provoking "the body's susceptibility to intensities of temporal rhythms." These screenings did not end conclusively so much as trail off gently, crossing a point "when the number of human bodies around the screen dwindled and those still remaining in the space may have already drifted off."[40] A similar elongation and intensity would be sought by the avant-garde filmmaker Gregory Markopoulos for his grand opus *Eniaios*, an eighty-hour-long cycle of films exhibited in portions every four years on a mountaintop in Arcadia. Called the Temenos, a Greek term for sacred sites, the event refers to the temples of the divine physician Asklepios where the afflicted would come to spend the

night and sleep "in order to dream their own cure."[41] Markopoulos conceives his cinema as a strain of incubation, a consecrated slumber that readies the sleeper for divine visitation and healing. As Rebekah Rutkoff recounts, "Markopoulos drew a line around a generous field in the creation of *Eniaios* and the Temenos, one that included not only his projected film reels but the place and the journey and every register of time, including sleep."[42]

To recall Kracauer's formulation, at any moment during the viewing of a film, absorption might give way to abandonment. The potential for involuntary responses and reveries to come to the fore, for the viewer's stream of thoughts to start to peel away, is omnipresent in the situation of projection. But the overnight format of circadian cinema escalates the fluid interplay between absorption and abandonment by providing it a generous field, a larger zone in which to unfurl. It heightens the mental drift that was always an intrinsic part of moving-image spectatorship. More than a mere reflection of contemporary developments that make an anomaly of the theatrical experience of moving images, these projects emphasize the historical endurance of dispersive, fluctuating forms of attention in the sphere of spectatorship. They magnify the irregularities and interferences that have always impinged upon the ideal of perfect attentiveness. In this regard, *Stray Dogs at the Museum* and *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* challenge the schematic contrast between the immobility, fixity, and absorption of the theater and the interactive, mobile, and distracted spectatorial practices of the postcinematic era.

The strategies pursued by Tsai and Apichatpong hearken back to earlier aesthetic explorations of deviant spectatorship, both within and beyond the sphere of cinema, and provoke a consideration of their relevance for present-day transformations of moving-image reception. To resume a point from the introduction, *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* resonates with a lineage of avant-garde performance in which prolonged duration gives rise to a mode of reception to which Richard Schechner refers as "selective inattention." The audience participates in such events by giving their attention to the performers, turning away, conversing with their neighbors, pausing for refreshments, or taking a nap—all of which, Schechner notes, amounts not to "ignoring the performance" but rather "adding a dimension to it," not expressing indifference to the event but rather evoking additional ways of valuing it.[43] To illustrate his point, he turns to the example of Robert Wilson's twelve-hour-long opera *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin*, staged in 1973 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. In addition to stretching from the evening until the following morning, the presentation included a space adjacent to the theater dedicated to breaks for socializing and refreshment, which was available to the audience continuously throughout the performance. Likewise, *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* included a similar type of space connecting to the main exhibition hall to which visitors availed themselves for eating, drinking, and hanging out during the run of the installation. The pattern of wavering attention elicited by the project thus took shape around a host of cravings—for food, drink, and conversation,

in addition to the urge to sleep—with the intersubjective exchanges thereby generated becoming as much a part of the experience of the work as its audio-visual content. Here, as in *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin*, the "social end" of the exhibition was as important as the "aesthetic end." In *Stray Dogs at the Museum*, too, the sleepover events linked the aesthetic component of the museum show with a structure of experience that included eating, storytelling, and live musical performances.

Closer to the time of Schechner's writing, selective inattention was explored in the arena of film by Andy Warhol, also in concert with long viewing times. Apropos of his five-hour-and-twenty-minute-long film *Sleep*, Warhol said, "It's a movie where you can come in at any time . . . . When people call up and say, 'What time does the movie start?' you can just say 'Any time.'"[44] Jonas Mekas, who operated the camera for *Empire*, Warhol's notorious eight-hour-long film of the Empire State Building, wrote of this work, "The Author won't mind (he is almost certainly encouraging it) if the Viewer will choose to watch only certain parts of the work (*film*), according to the time available to him, according to his preferences, or any other good reason."[45] The extreme length, static camera set-ups, and minimal action that have come to be seen as hallmarks of Warhol's filmmaking are not simply aimed to drag the audience to the nadir of boredom, Justin Remes has argued. Rather, they redirect the energies of the audience away from the screen—back to themselves, their environment, "the people next to you," and whatever responses these might provoke. As Warhol said of his films, "You could eat and drink and smoke and cough and look away and then look back and they'd still be there."[46] What these works pursued was not a trial of the viewer's stamina and patience, as is often assumed, but instead, Remes writes, "a distracted, fragmentary, and unfocused mode of spectatorship."[47]

Did they succeed in this pursuit? Writing about the first screenings of *Sleep* at the Film-Makers' Cinematheque (one of New York City's premier experimental film venues in the 1960s), Stephen Koch reports that in this forum, the film was greeted by viewers game for its provocation. "At the early screenings, audiences came forewarned, intending to make an evening of it. People would chat during the screening, leave for a hamburger and return, greet friends and talk over old times."[48] Other accounts, however, describe reactions to the film's unusual spectatorial contract that include rejection, bafflement, and even violent rage—including one from a Los Angeles theater where *Sleep* played in the year of its release.[49] The premiere of *Empire* in New York City was likewise met by an angry mob, as Mekas recalls.[50] And while the passing of time has brought increased attention to Warhol's films, along with sharper critical insights into his moving-image practice, this has not necessarily impacted the way his films are shown. In fact, the now mythic status of these early works has pushed selective inattention even further out of reach. A public screening of *Sleep* that I attended in 2019 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, organized in conjunction with its retrospective of the artist,

transpired entirely in a frozen reverent silence, broken only by a small scattering of self-conscious whispers and restless stirrings. The film drew a small but committed group of attendees, most of whom stayed until the end. The effort with which they trained their focus on the screen produced an atmosphere of palpable tension, at odds with Warhol's own casual stance.

The audience's conduct (myself included) owed much to the manner in which *Sleep* was shown—projected on a large screen in its original 16mm format, inside a completely darkened gallery filled with tiered rows of seats, with a designated start time and a separate ticketed entry. The museum eschewed the commonplace exhibitionary practice of transferring Warhol's films to video in order to play them on monitors or digital displays on a continuous loop, within light-filled spaces designed for ambulatory viewers. In its commendable fidelity to *Sleep* as a work of celluloid film, however, the presentation also betrayed the spirit in which it was meant to be received. The arrangement of the screening space not only prompted the attendees to comport themselves as if in a regular theater, but also introduced yet another set of behavioral codes specific to the museum, with its security scrutiny and strict prohibitions on consumption. The audience, far from being free to meander in body and mind, was ultimately pinned down at the intersection of two disciplinary dispositives.

Watching *Sleep* in this way prompted me to fantasize about more hospitable circumstances in which the multivalent reception envisioned by Warhol might be accessed. As well as being a cinematic work of its own, *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL* could serve as the prototype for an ideal viewing environment for films like *Sleep*, *Empire*, or even Warhol's rarely screened twenty-five-hour-long ***** (Four Stars)* (1967). While Warhol himself never drew a connection between *Sleep*'s primary subject and the viewer's potential response, this connection was explored in the 1997 installation *Sleep with Me*, by the artist duo Bik Van der Pol. The installation consisted of a 16mm projection of *Sleep* in its entirety during the overnight hours in an exhibition space in Duende, an independent artist cooperative in Rotterdam, outfitted with 30 beds. *Sleep with Me* executes a reinterpretation of the original work in the mold of circadian cinema, an intervention reframing the film as an event. Describing the reactions of those who attended, Liesbeth Bik recalls, "They didn't sleep immediately. At first there's this kind of excitement, reminiscent of youth hostels and puberty, maybe even erotic excitement. All the beds and the floor are occupied." And then after a while, "you only hear snoring and the rattling of the film projectors transporting the celluloid." This, Bik states, "is sleeping *together* . . . as well as experiencing that film."[51] As in *Stray Dogs at the Museum* and *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, the sleepover installation lays the groundwork for the withdrawal of the viewers' attention. At the same time, a heightened situational awareness emerges from this collective scene of slumber, taking shape across its unfamiliar proximities, affective transferences, and charged relationality. Like Tsai and Apichatpong, Bik Van der Pol turns to sleepy spectatorship to intensify cinema's dynamics as a situated social experience.



FIGURE 67. *Sleep With Me* (Bik Van der Pol, 1997). Duende, Rotterdam. Photo by Bob Goedewaagen. Courtesy of the artists.

Looking beyond the realm of galleries, museums, and film festivals to that of commercial film exhibition, one might well imagine experiencing *Sleep* in an environment that replicates the pleasures of watching movies in bed. In 2015 CJ CGV, South Korea's largest multiplex cinema chain (and the fifth largest in the world, operating more than 3,800 screens in seven countries), introduced Tempur Cinema, appointed with reclining double beds and pillows instead of seats. If the darkness of the theater is "like that of our bedrooms before going to sleep," then why not transform the theater into one giant bedroom and advertise this as a luxury viewing experience? The strategy is but the logical extension of a move toward slouchy spectatorship that began some time ago with the adoption of oversize reclining armchairs by upscale movie theaters, anticipating the inclinations of the indolent filmgoer described by Barthes and enticing them with the comforts of the bourgeois interior.[52] As the sleepy spectator exits the movie theater to enter a wider array of viewing spaces, so a reverse invasion transpires, with the horizontal affordances of the domestic sphere becoming a feature of theatrical exhibition. Weegee's assertion that movies are better than ever—a good place to eat, sleep, and make love—continues to prove its viability among contemporary exhibitors, factoring into their business models. For global high-end theater chains like CJ CGV or the Mexico-based Cinépolis (the fourth largest exhibitor in the world), the idea of an audience completely at home with the film fuels a multiplication of marketing strategies and distinctive viewing environments. Implied in these

strategies is a recognition that the differentiation of the shared public space of cinema—achieved with the aid of architectures of horizontality and enclosure, in combination with tiered levels of cost and exclusivity—might well be the very key to the movie theater's financial survival. As Juan Llamas Rodriguez observes, "In the consumption-based era of cinema, it is not the film that determines viewership, but the material, affective, and technical conditions of its exhibition."[53] With its diversionary comforts, Tempur Cinema might very well elicit the disdain of the purist cinephile. Nonetheless, its affirmation of filmgoing as a "communal social experience" shares in the vision of reception advanced by the artists and filmmakers discussed above. With changes in spectatorship come a scrambling of the aesthetic hierarchies that have traditionally structured the landscape of cinema.[54]

Schechner locates selective inattention in the realm of live performance, as a mode of reception that manifested in American postwar avant-garde theater and music while also reflecting this particular sphere's absorption of influences from South Asia and other parts of the world.[55] The circadian cinema of Tsai and Apichatpong demonstrates the viability of this mode of reception in contemporary global cinema and moving-image art, another sphere in which the coalescence of regionally specific and avant-garde practices has engendered novel experimental approaches. Their embrace of selective inattention in the context of moving-image exhibition can be tied to a growing recognition at the turn of this century of cinema itself as a performance, defined by immeasurable contingencies as much as by predictable mechanical reproduction, constituted by the doings and undoings of the viewer as much as by invariable structures.[56] The postcinematic era, in which so little of what cinema is can be taken for granted, paves the way for a sharper understanding of public spectatorship as more than merely the synchronized perception of prerecorded sounds and images. What is shared by the audiences of the works discussed above is not exactly the "experience of the work" in this strict sense, but rather what Schechner terms "the experience of experiencing it."[57] Circadian cinema realizes an open-ended idea of spectatorship, unfolding in an expanse of time that serves as a capacious container for a panoply of states of attention, doing, and being. Transpiring concurrently with the projection, these become intrinsic elements of the unreplicable experience of experiencing it.

In the circadian cinema, an audience comes together in order to come apart. Held together tightly in a space and time, viewers are simultaneously pulled in different directions by their specific wavelengths and rhythms, each one following their own drift. With sleep comes the insight that the scene of collective reception is structured less like Epstein's funnel than like a sieve—gathering together and dispersing in the same gesture, much like sleep itself. The sieve describes a loose, uneven web that knits the audience together in a relational matrix of proximities, gaps, and asynchronies. As essential as the "finely judged proximities" that constitute the shared experience of cinema are the "irreducible distances" that splinter this experience into a multitude of contingencies.[58] Sleep is uniquely capable of

conveying this form of experience insofar as it evokes detachment and participation, radical solitude and radical mutuality, in equal measures. As much as the act of sleep entails a withdrawal from one's self and surroundings, as Emmanuel Levinas observes, it also involves a seeking after and reestablishment of contact; "sleep always proceeds from . . . from the preexisting 'relationship' with a base, a place."[59] It consists in a closing that is also an opening, a detachment that is also a reattachment, and, for this reason, folds the social into the solitary, always implying a relation to a place and to other people. The audience that sleeps together thus captures the sense of a permeable whole, of a plurality that adheres in its anonymity, internal differences, and checkerboard inconsistency, within a space that feels both private and public. It is at the edges of sleep where cinema's collective takes shape.

As the momentum of technological transformation reaches new thresholds, concerns about the loss and disappearance of a beloved object compound. At the turn of the third decade of the twenty-first century, these concerns were compounded by the closure of movie theaters, along with other public spaces of gathering, during the lockdowns precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. For some independent exhibitors, like the ArcLight Cinemas in Los Angeles and the Castro Theatre in San Francisco, the financial strain of this temporary interruption of regular programming led to more permanent closures. If the business model of the movie theater has long confronted threats from the conveniences of home viewing, from television to video recordings to streaming platforms, the pandemic situation has entailed a sudden acceleration that brings into clear view that which awaits on the other side of imminent disappearance: a future of wholly privatized consumption wherein movies, data, and material goods circulate freely while the most privileged consumers rarely leave their homes. Perhaps more than ever, the category of spectatorship falls under the shadow of what Hansen terms "cynical celebrations of corporate communication" (see, e.g., the technology journalist Kara Swisher's op-ed entitled, "Sorry, We Aren't Going Back to the Movies").[60] And cinema is pulled ever closer to the brink of the irretrievable loss of its core character as a mass medium, one that involves "the audience as collective, the theater as public space, part of a social horizon of experience."[61]

But even as cinema keeps changing, we can still hope for its survival, Casetti insists, as long as the need for the experience of cinema endures.[62] Tsai and Apichatpong's circadian cinema makes a bid for the survival of cinema as a communal experience, refusing the future heralded by the triumph of the 24/7 digital economy, and it does so without prescribing in advance the relational forms this experience can assume, in full recognition of the ephemerality and unpredictability threading through the social horizon of spectatorship. The audience that sleeps together embodies cinema's potential as a shared activity with a public dimension—that is, as a potential rather than a secured reality, or as a capacity promised, wished for, and yet to be completely realized or exhausted. In its porous collectivity, this audience exposes the speculative character of the filmgoing

public, which is at once known and unknown, to borrow Jasmine Trice's formulation, "both imagined and empirical, an object of contemplation and imagination."[63] Sleep carves out a way forward in the face of uncertainty, and it conserves an assurance that something will remain to answer to the need for experience. Closing our eyes, we place our trust in the film and in cinema, resting in the conviction that it will still be there when we awaken.

NOTES

1. APICHATPONG WEERASETHAKUL AND THE TURN TO SLEEP

1. "*SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*," program brochure, International Film Festival Rotterdam, 2018.

2. Apichatpong Weerasethakul on *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, International Film Festival Rotterdam, January 24, 2018, https://iffr.com/en/blog/weerasethakul-on-sleep-cinemahotel.

3. *I Walked With a Zombie* (Jacques Tourneur, 1943).

4. Matthew Flanagan, "Towards an Aesthetic of Slow in Contemporary Cinema," *16:9* 29 (November 2008), www.16–9.dk/2008–11/side11_inenglish.htm.

5. "Have a Sleep During Einstein on the Beach," *BBC News*, May 4, 2012, www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-17958400.

6. Richard Schechner, "Selective Inattention: A Traditional Way of Spectating Now Part of the Avant-Garde," *Performing Arts Journal* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1976): 8–19. (La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela, John Cage, Andy Warhol.)

7. In 2008, Holler displayed a similar work in the Guggenheim Museum, *Revolving Hotel Room*, which could be reserved overnight for $800. For a description, see Andrea K. Scott, "Spin Cycle," *New Yorker*, November 12, 2008, www.newyorker.com/culture/goings-on/spin-cycle.

8. See www.tsumari-artfield.com/dreamhouse/e_index.html.

9. "Hopper Hotel Experience," Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, accessed December 13, 2019, www.vmfa.museum/calendar/events/hopper-hotel-experience/.

10. Melnikov's "Laboratory of Sleep" was at once utopic in its objective to devise a collective apparatus of blissful and restorative sleep by means of "the combined forces of art and technology" and disturbing in its commitment to behaviorist principles and technical manipulation. This duality provides a useful framework in which to consider contemporary projects seeking to improve slumber through the resources of art and technology.

See S. Frederick Starr, *Melnikov: Solo Architect in a Mass Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 179.

11. For a discussion of *8 Hours (Minimum)* and other examples, see Katharina Rost, "Drowsing in Theatre Performances: Lulling the Audience's Attention through Sonic Means," *Performance Research* 21, no. 1 (February 2016): 110–14. Rost describes such reactions with the term *Entrücktsein*, which she translates as "being set apart" from one's actual position (111).

12. See Jennifer Kraskinski, "Sleeping Around," *Artforum*, June 4, 2014, www.artforum.com/performance/jennifer-krasinski-on-jim-findlay-and-jeff-jackson-s-dream-of-the-red-chamber-46911.

13. Rich began to perform sleep concerts as a college student 1982 and continues to do so occasionally at music festivals. These overnight shows create an ambient environment of sounds that guide the listener through levels of consciousness, resulting in a state that Rich describes as "activated sleep. The sound, then, becomes like a thread of consciousness, where you can sort of guide yourself into a state of half sleep and notice the way that your brain shifts perceptions into an internal world." See Robert Rich, "Robert Rich: Full Transcript," *Fact*, July 4, 2013, www.factmag.com/2013/07/04/robert-rich-full-transcript/.

14. Tim Cooper, "Max Richter—Sleep," liner notes for *Sleep*, by Max Richter, Deutsche Grammophon GmbH, 2015, compact disc.

15. Liner notes for *Sleep*.

16. See *Max Richter's Sleep* (Natalie Johns, 2020).

17. Liner notes for *Sleep*.

18. Anne Carson, "Every Exit Is an Entrance (A Praise of Sleep)," *in Decreation: Poetry, Essays, Opera* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 17–42.

19. Maria Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration: Metaphors of Sex, Sleep, and Dreams* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). This coding of sleep coexists alongside its other associations with melancholy, drunkenness, and death, Ruvoldt notes (12).

20. Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 31, 49.

21. Ibid., 34–35.

22. "The Sleep Doctor's Secrets to an Ideal Sleep Environment," *Hemispheres* (February 2018): 72–75.

23. Adam Mansbach, *Go the Fuck to Sleep* (Brooklyn: Akashic Books, 2011).

24. See Samantha Harvey, *The Shapeless Unease: A Year of Not Sleeping* (New York: Grove Press, 2020); another example is Marina Benjamin, *Insomnia* (New York: Catapult, 2018).

25. Drew Ackerman, *Sleep with Me*, podcast audio, 2013–ongoing, www.sleepwithmepodcast.com/.

26. The phrase "critical sleep studies" comes from Benjamin Reiss, "Sleep's Hidden Histories," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, February 15, 2014, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/sleeps-hidden-histories/.

27. Rita Felski relates the hermeneutics of suspicion to a state of mind marked by "visual hyperalertness and sharpened attention." She writes, "It is a state incompatible with distraction, relaxation, ease, or entrancement. Rather, we are always 'on the lookout' . . . . [on]

a sharp-eyes and diligent hunt for information, as we press beyond appearances to ferret out hidden dangers." In Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 37–38.

28. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading, Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid You Probably Think This Essay Is about You," in *Touching, Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 149. Like Felski, Sedgwick refers to Paul Ricoeur's articulation of the hermeneutics of suspicion as the "intellectual baggage" carried by the paranoid critic (124).

29. Plato, *The Laws*, Book 7, ed. Malcolm Schofield, trans. Tom Griffith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 269–70.

30. Eric L. Santner, *The Weight of All Flesh: On the Subject-Matter of Political Economy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 37.

31. See Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night: The Industrialization of Light in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Angela Davies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

32. Eluned Summers-Bremner, *Insomnia: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), 76–77. The phrase "devotion and business . . . go hand in hand" comes from the English preacher George Whitefield; cited in Summers-Bremner, *Insomnia*, 77.

33. Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (New York: Verso, 2013), 12.

34. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, cited in Crary, *24/7*, 24.

35. "New Words Notes June 2017," *Oxford English Dictionary* blog, accessed July 14, 2021, https://public.oed.com/blog/june-2017-update-new-words-notes/.

36. Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 280.

37. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Fall of Sleep*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 13, 8.

38. Nancy, *Fall of Sleep*, 14, 13.

39. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Institution and Passivity: Course Notes from the Collège de France*, trans. Leonard Lawlor and Heath Massey (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 206.

40. Ibid., 206.

41. Ibid., 148–49.

42. Ibid., 142.

43. Ibid., 206.

44. Jacqueline Risset, *Sleep's Powers*, trans. Jennifer Moxley (Brooklyn, NY: Ugly Duckling Press, 2008), 71–72.

45. José Esteban Muñoz, "The Sense of Watching Tony Sleep," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 543.

46. Matthew Walker, *Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams* (New York: Scribner, 2017), 50, 52.

47. Thomas A. Wehr, "A Clock for All Seasons in the Human Brain," in *Progress in Brain Research*, vol. 3, *Hypothalamic Integration of Circadian Rhythms*, ed. R. M. Buijs et al. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1996): 321.

48. Verlyn Klinkenborg, "Awakening to Sleep," *New York Times*, January 5, 1997, www.nytimes.com/1997/01/05/magazine/awakening-to-sleep.html.

49. Roger Ivar Lohmann, "Sleeping among the Asabano: Surprises in Intimacy and Sociality at the Margins of Consciousness," in *Sleep Around the World: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Katie Glaskin and Richard Chenhall (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 44.

50. The phrase comes from Marcel Mauss, "Techniques of the Body," in *Sociology and Psychology: Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1979), 97–123.

51. May Adadol Ingawanij and David Teh, "Only Light and Memory: The Permeable Cinema of Apichatpong Weerasethakul," *Seismopolite: Journal of Art and Politics*, December 10, 2011, www.seismopolite.com/only-light-and-memory-the-permeable-cinema-of-apichatpong-weerasethakul.

52. On the idea of cinema's relocations, see Francesco Casetti, *The Lumière Galaxy: 7 Key Words for the Cinema to Come* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), ch. 1.

53. Catherine Fowler, "Room for Experiment: Gallery Films and Vertical Time from Maya Deren to Eija Liisa Ahtila," *Screen* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 324–43.

54. Volker Pantenburg, "1970 and Beyond: Experimental Cinema and Installation Art," in *Screen Dynamics: Mapping the Borders of Cinema*, ed. Gertrud Koch, Pantenburg, and Simon Rothöhler (Vienna: Österreichisches Filmmuseum: Synema–Gesellschaft für Film und Medien, 2012), 82; and Tiago de Luca, "Slow Time, Visible Cinema: Duration, Experience, and Spectatorship," *Cinema Journal* 56, no. 1 (Fall 2016): 36–38.

55. Exceptions to this tendency include Jihoon Kim, "Between Auditorium and Gallery: Perception in Apichatpong Weerasethakul's Films and Installations," in *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories*, ed. Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 125–41; Ingawanij and Teh, "Only Light and Memory"; and Una Chung, "Crossing over Horror: Reincarnation and Transformation in Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Primitive*," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 40, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Summer 2012): 211–22.

56. Erin Manning, "Introduction," in *Nocturnal Fabulations: Ecology, Vitality, and Opacity in the Cinema of Apichatpong Weerasethakul*, by Érik Bordeleau, Toni Pape, Ronald Rose-Antoinette, and Adam Szymanski (Open Humanities Press, 2017), 8.

57. Ibid., 8, 15.

58. I am grateful to Karen Redrobe for helping me to see this as my writing strategy and for encouraging me to embrace it.

59. Rost, "Drowsing in Theatre Performances," 112.

60. On this idea, see Yves Citton, *The Ecology of Attention* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017).

61. Paul Lafargue, *The Right to Be Lazy*, trans. Charles Kerr (Auckland, NZ: The Floating Press, 2012). For a reading of artworks involving sleep through the lens of the liberation of time from work, see Sven Lütticken, "Liberating Laziness—Chronopolitical Remarks," in *Art in the Periphery of the Center*, ed. Christophe Behnke et al. (New York: Sternberg Press, 2014), 220–37.

62. Jenny Odell, *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2019).

63. Lilian G. Mengesha and Lakshmi Padmanabhan, "Introduction to *Performing Refusal/Refusing to Perform*," *Women & Performance* 29, no. 1 (2019): 3.

64. Lutz Koepnick, *The Long Take: Art Cinema and the Wondrous* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 4.

65. Sarah Sharma, *In the Meantime: Temporality and Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 111.

2. SLEEP MUST BE PROTECTED

1. The language here comes from the Facebook page of Ellen Sebastian Chang.

2. See Deep Waters Dance Company, "House Full/of Black Women," www.deepwatersdance.com/portfolio/housefullofblackwomen-2/#1512970299483–3ffd1bd7–5cf4, accessed April 9, 2019. A previous episode of the project, *Black Women Dreaming*, included a similar private ritual of rest.

3. On the idea of economies of exhaustion, see Françoise Vergès, "Capitolocene, Waste, Race, and Gender," *e-flux* 100 (May 2019), www.e-flux.com/journal/100/269165/capitalocene-waste-race-and-gender/.

4. Kelly Glazer Baron et al., "Orthosomnia: Are Some Patients Taking the Quantified Self Too Far?" *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine* 13, no. 2 (February 2017): 351–54. The dialectic of problem and promise that I describe above directly fuels the hyperbolic extremes that characterize so much of sleep discourse today. A particularly overblown example of these hyperbolic tendencies can be found in the best-selling book *Why We Sleep* by Matthew Walker. Walker writes an imaginary advertisement for the magical panacea of sleep: "Scientists have discovered a revolutionary new treatment that makes you live longer. It enhances your memory and makes you more creative. It makes you more attractive. It keeps you slim and lowers food cravings. It protects you from cancer and dementia. It wards off colds and flu. It lowers your risk of heart attacks and stroke, not to mention diabetes. You'll even feel happier, less depressed, and less anxious. Are you interested?" (107).

5. The increase in specialized sleep clinics in the United States is illustrative: in the 1970s the number was three; in the 1990s there were more than 300; and currently there are estimated to be more than 4,000. See Matthew Wolf-Meyer, *The Slumbering Masses: Sleep, Medicine, and Modern American Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 29.

6. Katherine M. Keyes et al., "The Great Sleep Recession: Changes in Sleep Duration among US Adolescents, 1991–2012," *Pediatrics* 135, no. 3 (March 2015): 460–68.

7. See Walker, *Why We Sleep*, chs. 7 and 8. The U.S. Department of Transportation estimated 91,000 car accidents involving drowsy drivers in 2017, resulting in 795 fatalities (National Highway Traffic Safety Association, "Drowsy Driving," accessed August 18, 2020, www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drowsy-driving).

8. The role of sleep deprivation in the accident was discussed in the final report prepared by the State of Alaska Oil Spill Commission and published in February 1990; see https://evostc.state.ak.us/oil-spill-facts/details-about-the-accident/. The occurrence of numerous other industrial disasters during the dead of the night—including the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island in 1979, the 1984 gas leak at the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, the meltdown at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1986—has elicited speculation about whether these incidents might be also attributed to sleep deprivation.

9. For example, this observation is set forth powerfully in two articles by Keeanga Yamahtta-Taylor published in the spring of the outbreak: "Are We at the Start of a New Protest Movement?" *New York Times*, April 13, 2020, www.nytimes.com/2020/04/13/opinion

/protest-social-distancing-covid.html; and "The Black Plague," *New Yorker*, April 16, 2020, www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/the-black-plague.

10. Benjamin Reiss, *Wild Nights: How Taming Sleep Created Our Restless World* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 41.

11. E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present* 38 (December 1967): 56–97.

12. See Simon Williams, *The Politics of Sleep: Governing (Un)consciousness in the Late Modern World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

13. Crary, *24/7*, 8, 9.

14. Ibid., 3.

15. Renée A. Peñaloza et al., "Trends in On-label and Off-label Modafinil Use in a Nationally Representative Sample," *JAMA Internal Medicine* 173, no. 8 (2013): 704–6.

16. On the "capitalistic potential" of modafinil, see Sharma, *In the Meantime*, 42–43.

17. Crary, *24/7*, 14.

18. For an example of the shift from a post-sleep life of leisure to one of work in science fiction writing, compare the following: Diana and Meir Gillon, *The Unsleep* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1962) and Nancy Kress, *Beggars in Spain* (New York: William Morrow, 1993).

19. These ads have provoked much commentary, perhaps striking a nerve with their utterly unselfconscious dystopianism. See, for instance, Odell, *How to Do Nothing*, 16–17; and Jia Tolentino, "The Gig Economy Celebrates Working Yoursef to Death," *New Yorker*, March 22, 2017, www.newyorker.com/culture/jia-tolentino/the-gig-economy-celebrates-working-yourself-to-death.

20. Cited in Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," 89. Thompson also cites the poem "Early Rising" by Hannah More, in which she writes, "Nor let me waste another hour with thee, thou felon Sleep" (88).

21. Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1985), 99.

22. Roger Schmidt, "Caffeine and the Coming of the Enlightenment," *Raritan* 23, no. 1 (2003): 133.

23. Ibid., 135. Schmidt also argues that caffeine was essential for readers as much as for authors: "The history of caffeine consumption cannot be extricated from the history of literary consumption, especially of the novel . . . . It is hard to imagine the common reader progressing enjoyably through the nine hundred pages of *Tom Jones* or the seven volumes of *Clarissa* without the aid of artificial stimulants" (132).

24. Ibid., 138.

25. Summers-Bremner, *Insomnia*, 11.

26. Crary, *24/7*, 65. Crary's approach to sleep in this text can be further historicized in relation to his book *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), a study of the volatility of attention in the late nineteenth century. His treatment of sleep under late capitalism extends his previous reflections on modernity as "an ongoing crisis of attentiveness, in which the changing configurations of capitalism continually push attention to new limits and thresholds, with an endless sequence of new products, sources of stimulation, and streams of information, and then respond with new methods of managing and regulating perception" (13–14).

27. Crary, *24/7*, 74.

28. Ibid., 10, 15, 11.

29. Ibid., 10–11.

30. William Davies, "Economics of Insomnia," *New Left Review* 85 (January–February 2014): 144.

31. Ibid., 143.

32. Ibid., 144.

33. Arianna Huffington, *The Sleep Revolution: Transforming Your Life One Night at a Time* (New York: Harmony Books, 2016), 17.

34. Ibid., 4, 19.

35. Ibid., 23. Similar numbers can be found for other Western countries; for example, one report estimates a cost to the UK economy of £40 billion a year due to lost productivity from sleep deprivation; see Ellie Violet Bramley, "Dream Ticket: How Sleep Became a Billion-Dollar Business," *The Guardian*, April 17, 2018, www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/apr/17/sleep-billion-dollar-business-tiredness-spooning-robots-cuddle-blankets-luxury.

36. Huffington, *Sleep Revolution*, 47. A 2016 BBC Research report estimates the value of the sleep market to reach $84.9 billion by 2021; see www.bccresearch.com/market-research/healthcare/sleep-aids-techs-markets-report.html.

37. Ibid., 10, 3.

38. Ibid., 284.

39. Ibid., 18.

40. Ibid., 91.

41. Anna Della Subin, *Not Dead but Sleeping* (New York: Triple Canopy, 2017), 77. Della Subin relates this argument to the legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus.

42. This phrasing is taken from Jia Tolentino's essay "Always Be Optimizing," in *Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self-Delusion* (New York: Random House, 2019), 63–94.

43. See Cressida Heyes, *Anaesthetics of Existence: Essays on Experience at the Edge* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020).

44. Cressida Heyes, "Sleep, Sex, and Fairy Tales," interview with David Rutledge, *The Philosopher's Zone*, audio podcast, October 9, 2016, www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/philosopherszone/sleep-sex-and-fairy-tales/7905464.

45. Penelope Green, "The Squishiest, Sweetest Sleep," *New York Times*, December 6, 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/12/06/style/water-bed-founder.html.

46. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 26,

47. Ibid., 7.

48. Ibid., 103.

49. Ibid., 85, 86.

50. Ibid., 11.

51. Ibid., 136.

52. Ibid., 139, emphasis added.

53. Ibid., 103.

54. Huffington, *Sleep Revolution*, 91.

55. Eyal Ben-Ari, "Sleep and Night-time Combat in Contemporary Armed Forces," in *Night-time and Sleep in Asia and the West: Exploring the Dark Side of Life*, ed. Brigitte Steger and Lodewijk Brunt (New York: Routledge, 2003), 109.

56. Gregory Belenky, "Sleep, Sleep Deprivation, and Human Performance in Continuous Operations," Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Washington, DC, 1997, isme.tamu.edu/JSCOPE97/Belenky97/Belenky97.htm.

57. Ben-Ari, "Sleep and Night-time Combat," 114.

58. Nila Blackwell et al., "Leader's Guide to Soldier and Crew Endurance," U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, Fort Rucker, AL, 2015, accessed October 5, 2020, https://safety.army.mil/Portals/0/Documents/REPORTINGANDINVESTIGATION/TOOLS/Standard/LEADERS_GUIDE_TO_SOLDIER-CREW_ENDURANCE_15JAN2015.pdf.

59. Tony Schwartz, "Manage Fatigue in a Nonstop World with a Nap," *New York Times*, November 1, 2013, https://dealbook.nytimes.com/2013/11/01/manage-fatigue-in-a-nonstop-world-with-a-nap/. Schwartz is otherwise known for his work as the ghostwriter of the autobiography of Donald Trump, *The Art of the Deal*.

60. Tony Schwartz, "Sleep as a Competitive Advantage," *New York Times*, June 27, 2014, https://dealbook.nytimes.com/2014/06/27/sleep-as-a-competitive-advantage/.

61. Vern Baxter and Steve Kroll-Smith, "Normalizing the Workplace Nap: Blurring the Boundaries between Public and Private Space and Time," *Current Sociology* 53, no. 1 (January 2005): 34.

62. Ibid., 35.

63. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 144. The distinction I draw here between disciplinary order and biopolitical control is also informed by Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October* 59 (Winter 1992): 3–7.

64. A striking illustration of the biopolitics of napping comes from the practice of "sleep hacking," popular among the same demographic drawn to paleo diets and the quantified self movement. Sleep hacking rejects the premise that the human body requires a single, continuous (or monophasic) period of slumber for each twenty-four-hour cycle. Instead, sleep can be "reengineered" by breaking it up into multiple abbreviated (polyphasic) segments within each cycle. It is believed that adapting to a polyphasic sleep pattern can both reduce the overall amount of sleep required by the body by several hours and sustain a maximal degree of alertness; in this regard, sleep hacking yokes a principle of deduction together with one of optimization. For the scientific (?) rationale behind polyphasic sleep, see Claudio Stampi, "Evolution, Chronobiology, and Functions of Polyphasic and Ultrashort Sleep: Main Issues," in *Why We Nap: Evolution, Chronobiology, and Functions of Polyphasic and Ultrashort Sleep*, ed. Stampi (Boston: Birkhäuser, 1990), 1–20.

65. These high-tech lounge chairs, manufactured by MetroNaps, start at about $10,000. Google and Huffington Post number among their clients. Beatriz Colomina refers to the EnergyPod as an instantiation of "a whole new horizontal architecture" of continuous work, mirroring the "flat" networks of hyperconnectivity. See her "The 24/7 Bed," in *Work, Body, Leisure*, ed. Marina Otero Verzier and Nick Axel (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2018), 203.

66. *Faridabad Mazdoor Samachar* (Faridabad Workers' News), May 2014, translated by Shveta Sarda and cited in Raqs Media Collective, "Is the World Sleeping, Sleepless, or Awake or Dreaming?" *e-flux* 56 (June 2014), www.e-flux.com/journal/56/60349/is-the-world-sleeping-sleepless-or-awake-or-dreaming/.

67. Raqs Media Collective, "Is the World Sleeping, Sleepless, or Awake or Dreaming?"

68. http://sharjahart.org/sharjah-art-foundation/collection/dilbar.

69. Multiple reports on labor conditions in the UAE and other Gulf states have been compiled by the Gulf Labor Artist Coalition; see https://gulflabour.org/. For a detailed summary, also see David Keane and Nicholas McGeehan, "Enforcing Migrant Workers' Rights in the United Arab Emirates," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 15 (2008): 81–115.

70. Sharma, *In the Meantime*, 9.

71. Ibid., 7.

72. See Natasha J. Williams et al., "Racial/ethnic Disparities in Sleep Health and Health Care: Importance of the Sociocultural Context," *Sleep Health* 1, no. 1 (September 2015): 28–35; and Brian Resnick, "The Black–White Sleep Gap," *National Journal*, October 23, 2015.

73. Josie Roland Hodson, "Rest Notes: On Black Sleep Aesthetics," *October* 176 (Spring 2021): 14.

74. Ibid., 8.

75. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Belknap Press, 1960), 23. Also relevant in this context is the marshaling of sleeplessness in theories of innate racial difference, from figures like Thomas Jefferson and the physician Samuel Cartwright. Reiss writes, "Rather than seeing an obvious sign of exhaustion among laborers whose bodies were worn to the point of being 'deprived of our natural Senses' . . . Jefferson concluded that black slaves were naturally prone to sleep less than whites" (*Wild Nights*, 125–26).

76. Hartman writes, "The circulation of techniques of discipline across the Atlantic, between the plantation and the factory, and from the plantation to Northern cities trouble arguments based upon epochal shifts of power or definitive notions of premodern and modern forms of power." Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 138. See also Caitlin Rosenthal, *Accounting for Slavery: Masters and Management* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

77. Hodson, "Rest Notes," 8.

78. Sir John Gladstone, *A Statement of Facts Connected with the Present State of Slavery in the British Sugar and Coffee Colonies, and in the United States of America, Together with a View of the Present Situation of the Lower Classes in the United Kingdom, Contained in a Letter Addressed to the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peele, Bart.* (London: Baldwin and Cradock, 1830), 16.

79. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 109.

80. Kathryn Yussof, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

81. Ibid., 15, 16.

82. The Nap Ministry, "About," accessed September 8, 2020; Navild Acosta and Fannie Sosa, "Black Power Naps," accessed September 8, 2020, https://blackpowernaps.black/; The Church of Black Feminist Thought, "Supine Possibilities Lab," accessed November 20, 2020, www.blackfeministstudy.org/supinepossibilities. Like Tabor-Smith, Hersey speaks of the difficulty of finding photographs of Black people resting for the slideshows that accompany her sermons; see her comments in Maya Kroth, "It's a Right, Not a Privilege: The Napping Resistance Movement," August 19, 2020, https://elemental.medium.com/its-a-right-not-a-privilege-the-napping-resistance-movement-54fc147ba32b. For a discussion of The Nap

Ministry and *Black Power Naps*, along with *Black Womxn Dreaming*, linking these projects to contemporary artworks through the concept of "Black sleep aesthetics," see Hodson, "Rest Notes."

83. "Supine Possibilities Lab."

84. Yasmine Mathurin, "Activism Burnout and Self-care in Toronto's Black Lives Matter Movement," September 29, 2015, https://ryersonian.ca/activism-burnout-and-self-care-in-torontos-black-lives-matter-movement/.

85. Adriana Cavarero, *Inclinations: A Critique of Rectitude*, trans. Amanda Minervini and Adam Sitze (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020). Experiments in Supine Possibilities is inspired by a question put forth by the Combahee River Collective in its 1979 statement: "How might we use our position at the bottom to make a clear leap into revolutionary action?"

86. Judith Butler, *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 89–91.

87. Haytham El Wardany, *The Book of Sleep*, trans. Robin Moger (London: Seagull Books, 2020), 13.

88. Butler, *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 97, 98.

89. El Wardany, *Book of Sleep*, 14.

90. Alexandra Keller and Frazer Ward observe that while Burden is best known for works "of considerable physical intensity"—like getting shot in the arm—"more of his performances required a different kind of endurance as Burden's body took on the passivity and inertia of minimalist sculpture." Keller and Frazer, "Matthew Barney and the Paradox of the Neo-Avant-Garde Blockbuster," *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 2 (Winter 2006): 6.

91. Jennifer C. Nash, "From Lavender to Purple: Privacy, Black Women, and Feminist Legal Theory," *Cardoza Women's Law Journal* 11, no. 2 (2005): 305.

92. Jennifer C. Nash, "Black Feminine Enigmas, or Notes on the Politics of Black Feminist Theory," *Signs* 45, no. 3 (Spring 2020): 519.

93. Tina M. Campt, "The Loophole of Retreat—An Invitation," *e-flux* 105 (December 2019), www.e-flux.com/journal/105/302556/the-loophole-of-retreat-an-invitation/.

3. INTO THE DARK

1. Another real outbreak that the story evokes is the 1915–26 pandemic of encephalitis lethargica in Europe and the United States, one of the main symptoms of which was extreme sleepiness and catatonia. An overview of encephalitis lethargica (commonly referred to as "sleeping sickness") can be found in Oliver Sacks, *Awakenings* (New York: Doubleday, 1974).

2. Lohmann, "Sleeping among the Asabano," 21.

3. Apichatpong Weerasethakul, *Kick the Machine*, accessed January 31, 2020, www.kickthemachine.com/page80/page1/page51/index.html.

4. Apichatpong Weerasethakul, preproduction notes for *Haunted Houses (Thai Version)*, in *Apichatpong Weerasethakul*, ed. James Quandt (Vienna: Synema Publikationen, 2009), 216.

5. Maeve Connolly, *TV Museum: Contemporary Art and the Age of Television* (Bristol: Intellect, 2014), 115. Connolly points to the similarities between *Haunted Houses* and Apichatpong's first feature film, *Mysterious Object at Noon* (2000), which also involves the

participation of ordinary people as actors and cycles through multiple people in the same roles (115).

6. Elena Gorfinkel, "Weariness, Waiting: Enduration and Art Cinema's Tired Bodies," *Discourse* 34, nos. 2–3 (Spring–Fall 2012): 312, 313.

7. In a cursory survey, I counted more than thirty unique commissions and exhibitions by Apichatpong between 2000 and the present.

8. "*Apichatpong Weerasethakul: The Serenity of Madness* at Taipei Fine Arts Museum," *Independent Curators International Post*, February 7, 2020, https://curatorsintl.org/posts/taipei-fine-arts-museum-footage-from-apichatpong-weerasethakul-the-serenity

9. Gary Carrion-Murayari, "Interview with Apichatpong Weerasethakul," in *Apichatpong Weerasethakul*, ed. Gary Carrion-Murayari and Massimiliano Gioni (New York: New Museum, 2011), 10. In its entirety, the *Primitive* project comprised the feature film; the art installation entitled *Primitive;* two short films, *A Letter to Uncle Boonmee* and *Phantoms of Nabua;* and an edition in the print series *CUJO* (Andrea Amichetti and Andrea Lissoni, *CUJO: Year II, First Issue: Apichatpong Weerasethakul, PRIMITIVE* [Milan: Edizioni Zero, 2009]).

10. May Adadol Ingawanij, "Animism and the Performative Realist Cinema of Apichatpong Weerasethakul," in *Screening Nature: Cinema beyond the Human*, ed. Anat Pick and Guinevere Narraway (New York: Berghahn, 2013), 94.

11. Nicolas Rapold, "Cannes Interview: Apichatpong Weerasethakul," *Film Comment* blog, July 1, 2015, www.filmcomment.com/blog/cannes-interview-apichatpong-weerasethakul/.

12. Jeremy Elphick, "*Cemetery of Splendour*—An Interview with Apichatpong Weerasethakul," *4:3* (October 22, 2015), https://fourthreefilm.com/2015/10/cemetery-of-splendour-an-interview-with-apichatpong-weerasethakul/.

13. Apichatpong Weerasethakul, "Invisibility" production notes, *Kick the Machine*, accessed February 16, 2020, www.kickthemachine.com/page80/page22/page71/index.html.

14. Apichatpong Weerasethakul, "Fever Room" production notes, *Kick the Machine*, accessed February 16, 2020, www.kickthemachine.com/page80/page34/page59/index.html.

15. Carrion-Murayari, "Interview with Apichatpong Weerasethakul," 14.

16. Apichatpong Weerasethakul, *Apichatpong Weerasethakul Sourcebook: The Serenity of Madness* (New York: Independent Curators International/Chiang Mai: MAIIAM Contemporary Art Museum, 2016), 60.

17. Ingawanij, "Animism," 99.

18. Ibid., 91.

19. Arnika Fuhrmann, *Ghostly Desires: Queer Sexuality and Vernacular Buddhism in Contemporary Thai Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 20.

20. Ibid., 16. While such beliefs are viewed as primitive and backward from the perspective of the official state religion of Theravada Buddhism, Fuhrmann demonstrates how they are interwoven with everyday Buddhist practices.

21. Ingawanij, "Animism," 91.

22. Brynjar Bjerkem, ed., *Photophobia* (Oslo: Transnational Arts Production, 2013), 10.

23. Ashley Thompson, "Performative Realities: Nobody's Possession," in *At the Edge of the Forest: Essays on Cambodia, History, and Narrative in Honor of David Chandler*, ed. Anne Ruth Hansen and Judy Ledgerwood (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, 2008), 98.

24. Ibid., 99.

25. Apichatpong Weerasethakul, "Ghosts in the Darkness," in *Apichatpong Weerasethakul*, ed. James Quandt (Vienna: Synema Publikationen, 2009), 104.

26. Thompson, "Performative Realities," 99.

27. Jacqueline Rose, *On Not Being Able to Sleep: Psychoanalysis and the Modern World* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2003), 118.

4. EXITING AND ENTERING EARLY CINEMA

1. Laura Rascaroli, "Oneiric Metaphor in Film Theory," *Kinema* (Fall 2002): https://openjournals.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/kinema/article/view/982/1054.

2. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams: The Complete and Definitive Text* (1930), trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 35.

3. Ibid., 40.

4. Roland Barthes, *The Neutral*, trans. Rosalind E. Krauss and Denis Hollier (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 39, emphasis mine.

5. Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, ed. Strachey, 253.

6. Rose, *On Not Being Able to Sleep*, 107.

7. Freud writes this in *A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams* (1917), in which he resumes and further elaborates the ideas of the final chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. See Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, vol. 14, *A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams* (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), 226.

8. Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, ed. Strachey, 254.

9. Ibid., 570.

10. Ibid., 574, 578. When he returns to this subject in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Freud states, "Sleep is a state in which I want to know nothing of the external world, in which I have taken my interest away from it." He continues, "If this is what sleep is, dreams cannot possibly form part of its programme, but seem on the contrary to be an unwelcome addition to it. In our opinion, too, a dreamless sleep is the best, the only proper one." Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, vol. 15, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis (Parts I and II)* (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), 89.

11. Ernest Jones, cited in Rose, *On Not Being Able to Sleep*, 107.

12. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. Joyce Crick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 331–32. I cite this translation here because it more poignantly renders the tone of doubt in this passage.

13. Rose, *On Not Being Able to Sleep*, 108.

14. Ibid., 112. Freud makes a similar point in speaking of "the dream's navel, the spot where it reaches down into the unknown," beyond the reach of analysis.

15. Ibid., 110.

16. Rose writes, "There are points in Woolf when she appears to be writing from the place of the dead, in Proust when he pushes the sleeper off the edge of the knowable world. Both of them take Freud even further along paths which it feels as if he was reluctant, or only occasionally willing, to tread." Ibid., 9.

17. Barthes, *Neutral*, 37; Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 185; and Michel Jouvet, *The Paradox of Sleep: The Story of Dreaming*, trans. Laurence Garey (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999). Recent research on REM sleep has shifted sleep science toward an understanding of animal life as encompassing three separate states—REM sleep, NREM sleep, and wake—rather than structured by a single binary division between sleep and wake.

18. Scott Bukatman, *The Poetics of Slumberland: Animated Spirits and the Animating Spirit* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 62.

19. For a discussion of *Dream of the Rarebit Fiend* and *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, see ibid., chs. 1–2.

20. Ibid., 1.

21. Alexander Nemerov, "The Boy in Bed: The Scene of Reading in N. C. Wyeth's *Wreck of the 'Covenant*,'" *Art Bulletin* 85, no. 1 (March 2006): 15. This "doubleness," Nemerov notes, "is a leitmotif of children's fiction—the transformation of Max's room in Maurice Sendak's classic story *Where the Wild Things Are* is probably the best-known example" (16).

22. Ibid., 19.

23. On *The Life of an American Fireman* and the "primitive mode of representation," see Noël Burch, "Porter, or Ambivalence," *Screen* 19, no. 4 (December 1978): 91–106.

24. The scenario of the film given by the Edison catalogue of 1903 does little to dispel the scene's ambiguity: "The fire chief is dreaming, and the vision of his dream appears in a circular portrait on the wall. It is a mother putting her baby to bed, and the impression is that he dreams of his own wife and child. He suddenly awakens and paces the floor in a nervous state of mind, doubtless thinking of the various people who may be in danger from fire at the moment." Cited from Lewis Jacobs, *The Rise of the American Film: A Critical History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1939), 38.

25. The motif of sleep as an opening act finds a counterpart in the avant-garde gesture of eye opening as act one, found in films like *Un Chien Andalou* (Luis Buñuel, 1929) and *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929).

26. Carson, *Decreation*, 17.

27. The phrase "motionless voyage" comes from Noël Burch, *Life to Those Shadows* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 202.

28. Charles Keil, *Early American Cinema in Transition: Story, Style, and Filmmaking, 1907–1913* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 60.

29. Ibid., 70.

30. Ibid., 71–75.

31. Salman Rushdie, *The Wizard of Oz* (London: Palgrave Macmillan/British Film Institute, 2012), 29.

32. Kathleen Pyne, "On Feminine Phantoms: Mother, Child, and Woman-Child," *Art Bulletin* 85, no. 1 (March 2006): 44.

33. John David Rhodes, *Meshes of the Afternoon* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 106.

34. Rhodes's discussion expands on the sense in which Deren is trying to have it both ways. Yet she insists that a flower is just a flower.

35. P. Adam Sitney refers to *Meshes of the Afternoon* as a "psycho-drama," reflecting an "inward exploration" by the filmmakers, in his *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde 1943–1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 14.

36. Rhodes, *Meshes of the Afternoon*, 91.
37. Ibid., 106.
38. Gorfinkel, “Weariness, Waiting,” 314.

5. SOMNOLENT JOURNEYS

1. Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. Lydia Davis (London: Allen Lane, 2002), 1:7.
2. Ibid., 1:8.
3. A little later in this passage, Proust makes an even more explicit comparison between cinema and the confusion of sleep: “These revolving, confused evocations never lasted for more than a few seconds; often, in my brief uncertainty about where I was, I did not distinguish the various suppositions of which it was composed, any better than we isolate, when we see a horse run, the successive positions shown to us by a kinetoscope” (Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, 1:11).
4. Ibid., 1:9, 10.
5. Just as this first section of the book begins with the nightfall signaled by “For a long time, I went to bed early,” so it ends symmetrically with the first signs of dawn. “Thus I would often lie until morning thinking back to the time at Combray” begins the final paragraph of the chapter “Combray” (ibid., 1:186).
6. Barthes, *Rustle of Language*, 280.
7. Ibid., 281.
8. Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, 1:9.
9. Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. Ian Patterson, 6:183.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 6:180, translation modified.
12. Apichatpong, *Apichatpong Weerasethakul Sourcebook*, 39.
13. Fuhrmann, *Ghostly Desires*, 1–2.
14. Ibid., 4.
15. Charles Keyes, *Isan: Regionalism in Northeastern Thailand* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Dept. of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1967), 126.
16. According to Keyes, Isaan had a long history as a haven for dissidents and the politically dispossessed, dating at least to the sixteenth century. Writing in 1967—two years after the first outbreak of armed conflict between local communists and the Thai military—he described Isaan, or the “northeastern problem,” as the biggest threat to the project of national integration. Ibid., vii.
17. Apichatpong Weerasethakul, “The Memory of Nabua: A Note on the Primitive Project,” in *Apichatpong Weerasethakul*, ed. James Quandt (Vienna: Synema Publikationen, 2009), 197.
18. Ibid., 198.
19. Apichatpong, *Apichatpong Weerasethakul Sourcebook*, 73.
20. Ibid., 61.
21. Chung, “Crossing over Horror,” 218.
22. Apichatpong, *Apichatpong Weerasethakul Sourcebook*, 61.
23. Apichatpong, “Memory of Nabua,” 198.
24. Kong Rithdee, “*Cemetery of Splendor*,” *CinemaScope* 63 (Summer 2015): 49.

25. Iggy Cortez, "Licking for the Nation: Auntie Genealogies in Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Rak ti Khon Kaen*," *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 60, no. 3 (Spring 2021): 38.

26. Clayton Dillard, "Interview: Apichatpong Weerasethakul Talks *Cemetery of Splendour*," *Slant*, March 3, 2016, www.slantmagazine.com/features/article/interview-apichatpong-weerasethakul.

27. Ibid.

28. Elphick, "Cemetery of Splendour—An Interview."

29. See Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Exploration and Irony in Studies of Siam over Forty Years* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2014).

30. Kong, "*Cemetery of Splendor*," 49.

31. For an overview, see Claudio Sopranzetti, "Thailand's Relapse: The Implications of the May 2014 Coup," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 2 (May 2016): 299–316.

32. Kong, "*Cemetery of Splendor*," 49.

33. Ibid.

34. Rapold, "Cannes Interview: Apichatpong Weerasethakul."

35. Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), 70.

36. Michael Pigott, "The Image of Sleep," *Performance Research* 21, no. 1 (2016): 96. Pigott's examples include sci-fi films such as *Dark City* (1998) and *The Matrix* (1999).

37. Dillard, "Interview."

38. Every successful coup d'état since Sarit's ascension in 1958 has taken place with the approval of the palace, leading some commentators to describe the country as a "monarchized military," in which these two authoritarian institutions coordinate against challenges to their historic power by younger and weaker democratic institutions. See Paul Chambers, "Military 'Shadows' in Thailand since the 2006 Coup," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 40 (2013): 67–82; and Paul Chambers and Napisa Waitoolkiat, "The Resilience of Monarchised Military in Thailand," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 46, no. 3 (2016): 425–44.

39. Crary, *24/7*, 24.

40. Dillard, "Interview."

41. The notebook, which Jen discovers and leafs through in a scene early in the film, belongs to an actual political prisoner who died in jail. Apichatpong's short film *Ashes* (2012) refers to this same prisoner.

42. The director attributes his decision to withhold the film from distribution in Thailand to the risk of prosecution under lèse-majesté and security laws, which have been applied in an increasingly repressive and arbitrary manner since the coup. Eric Kohn, "Apichatpong Weerasethakul on Why 'Cemetery of Splendor' Will Be His Final Film in Thailand," *Indiewire*, September 30, 2015, www.indiewire.com/2015/09/apichatpong-weerasethakul-on-why-cemetery-of-Splendor-will-be-his-final-film-in-thailand-57276/.

43. Sopranzetti, "Thailand's Relapse," 318; and Kong Rithdee, "Big Brother's Watching Me Watching Him," *Bangkok Post*, March 14, 2015. As Apichatpong puts it, "In Thailand and many other places, there are no documents. There is only propaganda." Paul Dallas, "Chiang Mai: Apichatpong Weerasethakul on Friendship, Sleep, Ghosts, and Science Fiction," *Extra Extra* 9, accessed February 12, 2021, https://extraextramagazine.com/talk/apichatpong-weerasethakul-friendship-sleep-ghosts-science-fiction/.

6. INSENSATE INTIMACIES

1. This observation comes from May Adadol Ingawanij and Richard Lowell MacDonald, "Blissfully Whose? Jungle Pleasures, Ultra-Modernist Cinema, and the Cosmopolitan Thai Auteur," *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film* 4, no. 1 (2006): 50.

2. Hoger Römers, "Creating His Own Cinematic Language: An Interview with Apichatpong Weerasethakul," *Cineaste* 30, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 45.

3. Gorfinkel, "Weariness, Waiting," 315.

4. The scene calls to mind Jean Epstein's comparison of the close-up to a "lazy awakening." See Epstein, "Continuous Screenings," trans. Sarah Keller, in *Jean Epstein: Critical Essays and New Translations*, ed. Keller and Jason N. Paul (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 278.

5. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 189–90.

6. Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 58.

7. Barthes, *Neutral*, 40.

8. Risset, *Sleep's Powers*, 110. Risset even elevates the harmony of co-sleeping above that of sex. Given "the irritating problem of whether or not to make love," perhaps "just sleeping together is enough" (109). Sex between strangers is a common occurrence, but the same cannot be said of sleep.

9. Nancy, *Fall of Sleep*, 18.

10. Ibid., 31.

11. Ibid., 20, 24.

12. Ibid., 31.

13. Ingawanij, "Animism," 92.

14. Fuhrmann, *Ghostly Desires*, 157.

15. Ibid., 147.

16. See Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Enrique Juncosa, *For Tomorrow For Tonight* (Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2011).

17. Brian Bergen-Aurand, "The 'Strange' Dis/ability Affects and Sexual Politics of Apichatpong Weerasethakul's Transient Bodies," *CineAction* 96 (Summer 2015): 27. While Bergen-Aurand does not discuss *Cemetery of Splendor* (whose release postdates his essay), the film bears out the "dis/ability affects" that he traces.

18. Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*, cited in ibid., 26.

19. Paul Dallas, "Apichatpong Weerasethakul on Friendship, Sleep, Ghosts and Science Fiction," *Extra Extra* 9, https://extraextramagazine.com/talk/apichatpong-weerasethakul-friendship-sleep-ghosts-science-fiction/.

20. Anne Carson, *The Albertine Workout* (New York: New Directions Books, 2014), 5.

21. Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. Carol Clark, 5:60.

22. Ibid.

23. This reading is complicated by the proof that the control savored by Marcel is illusory, which comes with Albertine's subsequent disappearance, and by the possibility that Albertine is a stand-in for Proust's chauffeur Albert, with whom he was in love.

24. Apichatpong, *Apichatpong Weerasethakul Sourcebook*, 64.

25. Risset, *Sleep's Powers*, 23.

26. John Giorno, "Andy Warhol Interviewed by a Poet," in *I'll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews, 1962–1987*, ed. Kenneth Goldsmith (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2004), 25.

27. John Giorno, *Great Demon Kings: A Memoir of Poetry, Sex, Art, Death, and Enlightenment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020), 64.

28. See John G. Hanhardt, ed., *The Films of Andy Warhol Catalog Raisonné, 1963–1965* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2021), 46–63.

29. Branden W. Joseph, "The Play of Repetition: Andy Warhol's *Sleep*," *Grey Room* 19 (Spring 2005): 28. Joseph dissects the film's repetitive structure in minute detail.

30. Juan A. Suárez, "Warhol's 1960s' Films, Amphetamine, and Queer Materiality," *Criticism* 56, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 636.

31. James Quandt, "Resistant to Bliss: Describing Apichatpong," in *Apichatpong Weerasethakul*, ed. James Quandt (Vienna: Synema Publikationen, 2009), 15.

32. Along with permeability, casualness can be developed as another watchword for Apichatpong's practice. See Fuhrmann, *Ghostly Desires*, ch. 3.

33. Apichatpong, *Apichatpong Weerasethakul Sourcebook*, 39. A number of Apichatpong's email messages to Anderson between 2008 and 2015 are reproduced in the sourcebook, in two chapters entitled "Dear Khroo."

34. Jonathan Flatley, *Like Andy Warhol* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 168.

35. See Warhol's *Blow Job* (1964).

36. Joseph, "Play of Repetition," 33–35.

37. Giorno, *Great Demon Kings*, 62.

38. Ibid., 63.

39. Nicholas de Villiers, "Sleepy Cinema, Queer Phenomenology, and Tsai Ming-liang's *No No Sleep*," paper given at the Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, March 2021.

40. Yvette Bíró, "Tender Is the Regard: *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* and *Still Life*," *Film Quarterly* 61, no. 4 (Summer 2008): 34.

41. Song Hwee Lim, *Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 108.

42. Rey Chow, *Sentimental Fabulations*, *Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 190.

43. Vivian Lee, "Pornography, Musical, Drag, and the Art Film: Performing 'Queer' in Tsai Ming-liang's *The Wayward Cloud*," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1, no. 2 (2007): 121.

44. Helen Bandis, Adrian Martin, and Grant McDonald, "The 400 Blow Jobs," *Rouge* 7 (2005), http://www.rouge.com.au/rougerouge/wayward.html.

45. Lee, "Pornography, Musical, Drag, and the Art Film," 136.

46. Song Hwee Lim, "Manufacturing Orgasm: Visuality, Aurality, and Female Sexual Pleasure in Tsai Ming-laing's *The Wayward Cloud*," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 5, no. 2 (2011): 152.

47. Elena Gorfinkel, "Solitary Particles: Tsai Ming-liang's *The Wayward Cloud*," *Electric Sheep Magazine* (Spring 2009): 28.

48. Weihong Bao, "Biomechanics of Love: Reinventing the Avant-Garde in Tsai Ming-liang's Wayward 'Pornographic Musical,'" *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1, no. 2 (2007): 141.

49. Ibid., 149.

50. Ibid., 158.

51. For examples of the latter, see Chanel Miller, *Know My Name: A Memoir* (New York: Viking, 2019), and the 2020 television serial *I May Destroy You*, written by Michaela Coel and based on her own experience of being drugged and sexually assaulted.

52. Heyes, *Anaesthetics of Existence*, 52.

53. Ibid., 72.

54. Ibid., 63.

55. Audrie Pott committed suicide at the age of fifteen in 2012; Rehtaeh Parsons, a high school student, killed herself in 2013; and Daisy Coleman took her own life in 2020 after years of advocating for survivors of sexual assault.

56. Iris Marion Young, *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 155.

57. Ara Osterweil, *Flesh Cinema: The Corporeal Turn in American Avant-Garde Film* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 201.

58. Ibid., 205.

59. Ibid., 207.

60. Ibid., 192.

61. Ibid., 201.

62. Ruvoldt, *Italian Renaissance Imagery*, 18.

63. Leo Steinberg, *Other Criteria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 95.

64. Ibid., 98–99.

65. Yasunari Kawabata, *House of the Sleeping Beauties and Other Stories*, trans. Edward G. Seidensticker (Palo Alto, CA: Kodansha International, 1969), 24.

66. Osterweil, *Flesh Cinema*, 180.

67. My reading here is indebted to Kim Icreverzi, who identifies the trope of the somnambulantly laboring woman in several recent films, including *Dream* (Kim Ki-duk, 2008), *Air Doll* (Hirokazu Kore-eda, 2009), *Sleeping Beauty* (Julia Leigh, 2011), *Like Someone in Love* (Abbas Kiarostami, 2012), and *Asleep* (Shingo Wakagi, 2015). These films portray sleep as a mode of gendered labor and, in some cases, a kind of sex work performed by women. Kimberly Icreverzi, "Guardians of Sleep: Trans-Asian Visions of Somnambulant Labor," paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Chicago, March 23, 2017.

7. THE REGRESSIVE THESIS

1. Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, 1:8.

2. Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. Crick, 370.

3. Ibid., 370, emphasis in the original. Crick's translation makes the point more directly than the translation given by James Strachey, which says, "*Dreaming is a piece of infantile mental life that has been superseded*" (566–67).

4. Freud, *A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams*, 222.

5. Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. Strachey, 510.

6. Ludwig Jekels, "A Bioanalytical Contribution to the Problem of Sleep and Wakefulness," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 14 (1945): 171–72.

7. Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. Strachey, 127.

8. Freud observes that dreaming can be likened to psychosis, as a state in which wishing ends in hallucinatory fulfillment (ibid., 369).

9. Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, 88–89.

10. Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, 6:181, 180. My comparison is inspired by the dialogue that Rose constructs between Freud and Proust in "On Not Being Able to Sleep."

11. Carson, *Decreation*, 22.

12. Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. Strachey, 513–14.

13. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book 11*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 58.

14. Ibid., 55.

15. Ibid., 58.

16. Ibid., 60. Later in this seminar, Lacan returns to the example of the dream of the burning child to illustrate what he calls "the split between the eye and the gaze." Reiterating the point that there is more than one reality that determines awakening and authenticates perception, he expands on the scopic experience of the subject who is split between these realities (68–70).

17. Jacques Lacan, "Improvisation: Désir de mort, rêve et réveil," *L'Ane* 198, no. 3 (Autumn 1981), www.valas.fr/Jacques-Lacan-Desir-de-mort-reve-et-reveil,053?lang=fr. Cited and translated by Peter Schwenger, *At the Borders of Sleep: On Liminal Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 107. My reading of these passages in Lacan is informed by Schwenger's illuminating discussion of Lacan in *At the Borders of Sleep*, 91–95. (Cf. Rose's description of sleep as "Janus-faced.")

18. Chuang Tzu, *The Book of Chuang Tzu*, trans. Martin Palmer with Elizabeth Breuilly, Chang Wai Ming, and Jay Ramsay (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 20.

19. Jacques Lacan, *The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955 (The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book 2)*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), 125–26.

20. Ibid., 126.

21. René Descartes, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 1–7.

22. D. N. Rodowick, *What Philosophy Wants from Images* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 35.

23. Merleau-Ponty, *Institution and Passivity*, 148–49.

24. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 6.

25. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 190.

26. Merleau-Ponty, *Institution and Passivity*, 207.

27. Ibid., 147.

28. Ibid., 207. As James Morley writes in his commentary on Merleau-Ponty's position on dreams, "Whether waking or sleeping, the subject is always more or less in relation to the world, never absolutely present or absent. In other words, the world is never missing from the sleeper's awareness in the absolute sense that the dualistic language of conscious/unconscious or even waking/sleeping imposes on us." James Morley, "The Sleeping Subject: Merleau-Ponty on Dreaming," *Theory and Psychology* 9, no. 1 (1999): 94.

29. Merleau-Ponty, *Visible and the Invisible*, 221, cited by Claude Lefort in his foreword to Merleau-Ponty, *Institution and Passivity*, xxii.

30. See, for instance, Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, ch. 5, and his *Institution and Passivity*, part 2.

31. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 189. Like Freud, Merleau-Ponty draws a connection between the everyday and the pathological.

32. Merleau-Ponty, *Institution and Passivity*, 142.

33. Ibid., 124. Intriguingly, he underscores this point with a baking metaphor: passivity is "softness in the dough of consciousness" (136).

34. Ibid., 190.

35. See Jekels, "A Bioanalytical Contribution"; and William Stekel, *Twelve Essays on Sex and Psychoanalysis*, trans. and ed. S. A. Tennenbaum (New York: Critic and Guide, 1922), ch. 2.

36. Stekel, *Twelve Essays*, 68.

37. For example: "Thus the censorship between the *Ucs*. and the *Pcs*., the assumption of whose existence is positively forced upon us by dreams, deserves to be recognized and respected as the watchman of our mental life. Must we not regard it, however, as an act of carelessness on the part of that watchman that it relaxes its activities during the night, allows the suppressed impulses in the *Ucs*. to find expression?" Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. Strachey, 567.

38. The phrase comes from Noam M. Elcott, *Artificial Darkness: An Obscure History of Modern Art and Media* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2016).

39. Freud, *A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams*, 233.

40. For a different take on regression and mass culture, see Theodor W. Adorno, "The Fetish Character of Music and the Regression of Listening," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1985), 270–99. Adorno describes contemporary music in the age of mass communications as being "arrested at the infantile stage" and giving rise to a collective mode of "regressive listening" (286–87).

41. Lotte H. Eisner, *Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland* (Heidelberg: Verlag Das Wunderhorn, 1984), 285. I thank Helen Krüger for her translation of this passage.

42. Michael Althen, https://michaelalthen.de/zur-person/wuerdigungen/nachruf-liebling-ich-bin-im-kino/; with thanks to Shane Denson for his translation of this passage.

43. Craig Hubert, "Grandmother of French New Wave Agnès Varda on Becoming an Artist at 88," *Artsy*, March 6, 2017, www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-grandmother-french-cinema-agnes-varda-artist-88.

44. Jamsheed Akrami, "Interview," *A Taste of Cherry*, DVD, dir. Abbas Kiarostami (New York: Criterion Collection, 1999).

45. Raúl Ruiz, *Poetics of Cinema I*, trans. Brian Holmes (Paris: Éditions Dis Voir, 1995), 119.

46. André Breton, "As in a Wood" (1951), in *The Shadow and Its Shadow: Surrealist Writings on the Cinema*, ed. and trans. Paul Hammond (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2000), 73–74.

47. Abraham Geil, "The Spectator without Qualities," in *Rancière and Film*, ed. Paul Bowman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 53.

48. Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliot (New York: Verso, 2011), 2.

49. Martin Seel, "The Ethos of Cinema," *Contemporary Aesthetics* 5 (2016): https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_contempaesthetics/vol0/iss5/3/. Seel explicates the "active passivity" of cinema with reference to Adorno's theories of aesthetic experience, but his ideas also resonate with Stanley Cavell's thesis that cinema, in enabling its viewer to regard a world from a position unseen and removed, answers to a wish to shed the burdens of power and to inhabit a sense of helplessness. As Jennifer Fay puts it, Cavell defines cinema as a technology of "invested passivity." See Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), ch. 6; and Jennifer Fay, *Inhospitable World: Cinema in the Time of the Anthropocene* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 157.

50. Seel, "Ethos of Cinema."

51. Rancière, *Emancipated Spectator*, 12.

52. Merleau-Ponty, *Institution and Passivity*, 192.

53. Scott Henderson, "Apichatpong Weerasethakul at GSFF," *Listfilm*, January 30, 2018, https://film.list.co.uk/article/98818-apichatpong-weerasethakul-at-gsff-i-encourage-the-organiser-to-bring-some-beds-and-the-audiences-to-bring-pillows-and-sheets/.

8. NARCOTIC RECEPTION

1. The images come from the series *Enfant nu, course, aller et retour; Jeune Garçon nu sautant en l'air;* and *Homme nu lançant une brique*, all from 1892. Identified in Judith Revault d'Allonnes, *Holy Motors de Léos Carax: Les Visages sans yeux* (Crisnée: Editions Yellow Now, 2016), 11–12.

2. For a discussion of *Goodbye Dragon Inn*'s activation of the memory of cinema, see Jean Ma, *Melancholy Drift: Marking Time in Chinese Cinema* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), ch. 4.

3. Daniel Morgan, "The Curves of a Straight Line: *Holy Motors* and the Powers and Puzzles of Cinematic Forms," published as "Kurverne i den lige linje: *Holy Motors* og den filmiske gådes kraft," trans. Lasse Winther Jensen, in *Krystalbilleder: Tidsskrift for filmkritik* 5 (2015): 37–38.

4. Breton, "As in a Wood," 73–74.

5. Robert Desnos, "*Fantômas, Les Vampires, Les Mystères de New York*" (1927), in *French Film Theory and Criticism*, vol. 1, *A History/Anthology, 1907–1939*, ed. Richard Abel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 398.

6. Roland Barthes, "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater" (1975), trans. Bertrand Augst and Susan White, in *Apparatus, Cinematographic Apparatus: Selected Writings*, ed. Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (New York: Tanam Press, 1980), 2; translation modified.

7. Jules Romains, "The Crowd at the Cinematograph" (1911), in *French Film Theory and Criticism*, vol. 1, *A History/Anthology, 1907–1939*, ed. Richard Abel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 53.

8. Ibid.

9. Jean Comolli, "Notes on the New Spectator" (1966), in *Cahiers du Cinéma 1960–1968: New Wave, New Cinema, Reevaluating Hollywood*, ed. Jim Hillier (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 213.

10. Comolli, "Notes on the New Spectator," 211, 213.

11. Ibid., 211.

12. Ibid., 213. He proposes to remedy this homogenization effect by projecting films not in darkness but half-light.

13. Arnold Aronson, "Theatres of the Future," *Theater Journal* 33, no. 4 (December 1981): 492.

14. Robert Smithson, "Entropy and the New Monuments" (1966), in *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations*, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 15. Here Smithson, like Comolli, has in mind the homogenization of the filmgoing experience, for he continues, "Even the place where you buy your ticket is called a 'box-office.' The lobbies are usually full of box-type fixtures like the soda-machine, the candy counter, and telephone booths. Time is compressed or stopped inside the movie house, and this in turn provides the viewer with an entropic condition."

15. Robert Smithson, "A Cinematic Atopia" (1971), in Holt, *Writings of Robert Smithson*, 105, 107.

16. Ibid., 107.

17. Iris Barry, *Let's Go to the Movies* (New York: Payson and Clarke, 1926), 31.

18. Jocelyn Szczepaniak-Gillece, "Revisiting the Apparatus: The Theatre Chair and Cinematic Spectatorship," *Screen* 57, no. 3 (Autumn 2016): 262.

19. Olivia Howard Dunbar, "The Lure of the Films" (1913), in *Red Velvet Seat: Women's Writing on the First Fifty Years of Cinema*, ed. Antonia Lant with Ingrid Periz (New York: Verso, 2006), 76.

20. Benjamin Fondane, "From Silent to Talkie: The Rise and Fall of Cinema" (1930), trans. Claudia Gorbman, in *French Film Theory and Criticism*, vol. 2, *A History/Anthology, 1929–1939*, ed. Richard Abel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 48; and Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 116.

21. Freud observes that the relaxation of critical activity and emergence of "involuntary ideas" characterizing sleep are also to be found in hypnosis; see *Interpretation of Dreams*, ed. Strachey, 127. As Jonathan Crary points out, the idea of mesmerism that first took shape in the nineteenth century situated it in adjacency to sleep. He gives the examples of works such as James Braid's *Neurypnology or the Rationale of Nervous Sleep* (1843) and Auguste Liébeault's *Le sommeil provoqué et les états analogues* (1889). See Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 66–68.

22. Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (1960; repr., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 160.

23. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 159.

24. Ibid., 165.

25. Ibid., 159. These ideas echo Jean Epstein's description of the cinema effect as drug-like, although Epstein's examples fall in the category of stimulants rather than opiates: "Truly, the cinema creates *a particular system of consciousness limited to a single sense*. And after one has grown accustomed to using this new and extremely intellectual state, it becomes a sort of need, like tobacco or coffee. I have my dose or I don't. Hunger for a hypnosis far more intense than reading offers, because reading modifies the functioning of the nervous system much less." Jean Epstein, "Magnification" (1921), trans. Stuart Liebman, in *French Film Theory and Criticism*, vol. 1, *A History/Anthology, 1907–1939*, ed. Richard Abel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 240.

26. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 159.

27. Ibid., 159. For a more detailed discussion of the motif of disintegration in Kracauer's writings about visual media, see Miriam Bratu Hansen, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), ch. 1 ("Film, Medium of a Disintegrating World").

28. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 159.

29. Ibid., 164–65.

30. Ibid., 166.

31. Merleau-Ponty, *Institution and Passivity*, 206.

32. Hansen, *Cinema and Experience*, 262.

33. Johannes von Moltke, *The Curious Humanist: Siegfried Kracauer in America* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 185. On this front, Kracauer's thinking was at odds with the psychoanalytic paradigms of spectatorship—and ideas of "subject effect"—that dominated the period following the publication of *Theory of Film*, a fact that accounts for the book's dismissive reception by contemporary film theorists. At the same time, his emphasis on dissociated subjectivity anticipates later theories of spectatorship, such as Linda Williams's account of the body "beside itself" and approaches inspired by philosophies of sensation and affect. Compare Kracauer's discussion to Rodowick's account of sensation as the becoming indiscernible of the self: "where I am caught up in actions, movements, sounds, and energies where I am no longer 'I,' a subject considering an object at a distance, but rather disappear into sensations of which I have become an active part." Rodowick, *What Philosophy Wants from Images*, 137.

34. Moltke reads in Kracauer's description of the film spectator the figure of a new, "diminished" postwar subject, emergent from "the ruins of subjectivity" (*Curious Humanist*, 181). In Hansen's reading, Kracauer's reflections on spectatorship serve as the basis for "a paradigmatic mode of experiencing, of encountering and discovering, the world in the wake of *and beyond* [the] historic crisis" of modernity (*Cinema and Experience*, 255).

35. Michel Dard, "Valeur Humaine du Cinéma" (1928), in *Cinéma & Littérature: Le Grand Jeu*, ed. Jean-Louis Leutrat (Le Havre: De l'incidence éditeur, 2010), 167. I am grateful to Moltke for sharing this essay with me.

36. Cited in Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 165; translation modified. Moltke points to the irony of the title Dard gives to his essay: "The vegetative state of an amoeba as emblem of cinema's *valeur humaine:* so curious is the humanism of early film theory." Johannes von Moltke, "The Curious Humanism of Classical Film Theory," paper delivered at "Film Theory in Media History: Nodes and Edges," Shanghai University, June 2016.

37. Dard, "Valeur Humaine du Cinéma," 172.

38. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 165.

39. Cited in and translated by Scott Curtis in *The Shape of Spectatorship: Art, Science, and Early Cinema in Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 136. Gaupp's counterparts across the Atlantic, the American psychologists involved in the Payne Fund Studies of Motion Pictures and Youth, formulated the relationship between sleep and film spectatorship in different terms. Jani Scandura points out that the researchers assumed a causal connection between disordered sleep and film spectatorship and, on this basis, studied the sleep patterns of children for evidence of the influence of movie viewing. Their assumption was based upon a hypothesis that motion pictures would have a negative

impact on "relaxed, recuperative sleep," acting like a stimulant rather than an opiate. See Jani Scandura, "Cinematic Insomnia," *New Formations* 53 (Summer 2004): 106; and Samuel Renshaw, Vernon L. Miller, and Dorothy P. Marquis, *Children's Sleep: A Series of Studies on the Influence of Motion Pictures; Normal Age, Sex, and Seasonal Variations in Motility; Experimental Insomnia; the Effects of Coffee; and the Visual Flicker Limens of Children* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), 2.

40. Raymond Bellour, "From Hypnosis to Animals," trans. Alistair Fox, with an introduction by Hilary Radner and Cecilia Novera, *Cinema Journal* 53, no. 3 (Spring 2014): 13. Kracauer's observations extend a common refrain in discussions of cinema comparing it to an instrument of mass or collective hypnosis. The analogy has been made by psychologists examining audience response, filmmakers reflecting on their art, and film historians. See Rae Beth Gordon, *Why the French Love Jerry Lewis: From Cabaret to Early Cinema* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Stefan Andriopoulos, *Possessed: Hypnotic Crimes, Corporate Fiction, and the Invention of Cinema* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Raymond Bellour, *Le Corps du cinéma: Hypnoses, émotions, animalités* (Paris: P.O.L, 2009); and Curtis, *Shape of Spectatorship*.

41. Metz, *Imaginary Signifier*, 49.

42. D. N. Rodowick, *Elegy for Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 219.

43. "Psychanalyse et cinéma." Special issue, *Communications* 23 (1975).

44. Metz, *Imaginary Signifier*, 119.

45. Ibid., 125.

46. This focus sets the two essays apart from the other texts that stand as the authors' major contributions to the theorization of an abstracted, idealist spectatorial position: Baudry's "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus" and Metz's "Imaginary Signifier."

47. Baudry, "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in the Cinema" (1975), in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 104–26.

48. Freud, *A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams*, 234.

49. Ibid., 232. Freud here makes a distinction between a perception that is real and one that is a hallucination. As an instance of the latter, dreaming can be likened to a form of hallucinatory wishful psychosis, along with evoking an earlier phase of development.

50. Baudry, "Apparatus," 308. The notion of the loss of a connection to reality that can expose the illusion as illusion also circulates in earlier film discourse. For example, Jean Goudal writes, "When we sleep our senses are idle, or rather their solicitations do not cross the threshold of consciousness and, the reducing contrast no longer existing, the imaginary succession of images monopolizes the foreground; as nothing contradicts them we believe in their actual existence." See Goudal, "Surrealism and Cinema" (1925), in *Shadow and Its Shadow: Surrealist Writings on the Cinema*, ed. and trans. Paul Hammond (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2000), 86.

51. Baudry, "Apparatus," 314.

52. Metz, *Imaginary Signifier*, 107.

53. Ibid., 116–17; translation modified.

54. Ibid., 116, my emphasis.

55. Ibid., 103.

56. Ibid., 115.

57. Ibid., 103.

58. Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. Strachey, 544; see also *A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams*, 223–24. Metz cites this account in *Imaginary Signifier*, 113–15, and Baudry in "Apparatus," 308–10.

59. Baudry, "Apparatus," 313.

60. Metz, *Imaginary Signifier*, 115, 118.

61. Rodowick, *Elegy for Theory*, 217.

62. Ibid., 252–53.

63. Ibid., 225.

64. Metz, *Imaginary Signifier*, 138.

65. Crary, *24/7*, 24.

66. When Baudry compares the immobilized prisoner of Plato to the filmgoer "leaning back into his chair," he also conjures an image of the patient knocked out in the dentist's chair; "Apparatus," 303.

67. Baudry, "Apparatus," 314.

68. Ibid., 315.

69. Metz, *Imaginary Signifier*, 101.

70. Ibid., 112–13.

71. Ibid., 109.

72. Ibid., 118.

73. Ibid., 109.

74. Ibid., 123.

75. Admittedly, Metz might well object to this characterization of his approach. In his *Imaginary Signifier*, he distances his materialist orientation from the idealism of phenomenological film theory (52–53). But as Daniel Fairfax has argued—and careful scrutiny will corroborate—the intellectual distance between psychoanalysis and phenomenology was overstated in this period of his writing. Later, Metz would even characterize *Imaginary Signifier* as "a work of psychoanalytic phenomenology," as Dominique Chateau and Martin Lefebvre point out. See Daniel Fairfax, "Between Phenomenology and Psychoanalysis: Jean-Pierre Meunier's Theory of Identification in the Cinema," in *The Structures of the Film Experience by Jean-Pierre Meunier: Historical Assessments and Phenomenological Expansions*, ed. Julian Hanich and Fairfax (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 176–77; and Dominique Chateau and Martin Lefebvre, "Dance and Fetish: Phenomenology and Metz's Epistemological Shift," *October* 148 (Spring 2014): 130.

76. Metz, *Imaginary Signifier*, 107.

77. Ibid., 101.

78. Ibid., 103.

79. Ibid., 107, 103.

80. Ibid., 106.

81. Ibid., 108.

82. Ibid., 107.

83. Ibid., 138.

84. Jocelyn Szczepaniak-Gillece, *The Optical Vacuum: Spectatorship and Modernized American Theater Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 138.

85. Meredith Ward, *The Static in the System: Noise and the Soundscape of American Cinema Culture* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 87.

86. *Art, Life, and Theories of Richard Wagner*, ed. and trans. Edward L. Burlingame (New York: Henry Holt, 1875), 272, cited in Ward, *Static in the System*, 95.

87. Wyss argues, "The Wagnerian stage contributed less to the development of theater praxis than to something one step beyond, as Wagner's perfect 'black box' foreshadows the movie screen." Beat Wyss, "*Ragnarök* of Illusion: Richard Wagner's 'Mystical Abyss' at Bayreuth," trans. Denise Bratton, *October* 54 (1990): 77.

88. Ibid., my emphasis.

89. Elcott, *Artificial Darkness*, 4.

90. Here I cite the translation of Wagner's "The Art-Work of the Future" (1849) given by Elcott in *Artificial Darkness*, 51.

91. Elcott writes, "The student is produced by the school system, the soldier by the military, the prisoner by the penitentiary, the worker by the factory, and, most relevant here, the spectator by the cinema." Elcott, *Artificial Darkness*, 68.

92. Giorgio Agamben, *What Is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 14.

93. Wyss, "*Ragnarök* of Illusion," 77.

94. Jocelyn Szczepaniak-Gillece, "In the House, in the Picture: Distance and Proximity in the American Mid-Century Neutralized Theatre," *World Picture* 7 (2012): 7.

9. A LITTLE HISTORY OF SLEEPING AT THE MOVIES

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Ralph Waldo Emerson: The Major Prose*, ed. Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson (Cambridge. MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2015), 226–27.

2. Weegee [Arthur Fellig], *Weegee's People* (New York: Essential Books, 1946), ch. 6 ("The Children's Hour").

3. "Voyeurism is the passion to see, to perceive; it is one of the foundations of the cinema institution." See Christian Metz, *Conversations with Christian Metz: Selected Interviews on Film Theory (1970–1991)*, ed. Warren Buckland and Daniel Fairfax (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 153.

4. *Their First Murder* was published in the October 9, 1941, issue of *PM* with the caption: "Pupils were just leaving P.S. 143, in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, at 3:15 yesterday when Peter Mancuso, 22, described by police as a small-time gambler, pulled up in a 1931 Ford at a traffic light a block from the school. Up to the car stepped a waiting gunman, who fired twice and escaped through the throng of children. Mancuso, shot through the head and heart, struggled to the running board and collapsed dead on the pavement. Above are some of the spectators." See Brian Wallis, ed., *Murder Is My Business* (New York: International Center of Photography and Prestel, 2013), 94.

5. Anthony W. Lee and Richard Meyer frame Weegee's career with respect to the rise of the illustrated press, forging a new definition of "news" that was closely bound to "the special photographic cultivation of visual knowledge." See Lee and Meyer, *Weegee and Naked City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 4. A chapter from Weegee's

autobiography that discusses his work as a photojournalist speaks to the sensationalist thrust of this mode of visual knowledge, bearing the title of "Murder, Inc." See his *Weegee by Weegee* (New York: Ziff-Davis Publishing, 1961), 51.

6. Lucy Sante, "City of Eyes," in *Unknown Weegee* (New York: International Center of Photography; Gottingen: Steidl, 2006), 11.

7. Alan Trachtenberg, "Weegee's City Secrets," in Wallis, *Murder Is My Business*, 230. One of the publications authored by the photographer bears the title *Weegee's Secrets of Shooting with the Photoflash*.

8. Ibid., 231, 226.

9. According to Christopher Bonanos, Weegee first began using infrared film in April of 1942, while shooting people on the street during a wartime blackout drill. See Bonanos, *Flash: The Making of Weegee the Famous* (New York: Henry Holt, 2018), 159.

10. In the case of a set of photographs taken in 1953, which I discuss at greater length below, Weegee recalls: "I disguised myself as an icecream vendor. I hid my camera in the icecream tray, and cruised the balcony. Every time I saw a couple, *Bingo!* As a matter of fact, I made a little extra money selling at the same time." *Weegee by Weegee*, 117–18.

11. Ibid., 117.

12. Summers-Bremner, *Insomnia*, 133.

13. Wild traces the rise of, and resistance to, this bourgeois norm of absorptive spectatorship in the forms, practices, and discourses of French cinema in the early twentieth century. See Wild, *The Parisian Avant-Garde in the Age of Cinema, 1900–1923* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), ch. 4.

14. Eyerman's photo was used as the cover image for Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black and Red, 1983).

15. "An Eyeful at the Movies," *Life*, December 15, 1952, 146.

16. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility" (third version), in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 4, *1938–1940*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 264.

17. Perhaps this strategy shows how difficult at times it was for Weegee to get physically close to his subjects without being detected, at the same time that it compensates for this difficulty.

18. Metz, *Imaginary Signifier*, 107, 103.

19. *Weegee by Weegee*, 117.

20. Weegee, "Movies Are Better than Ever," *Brief* 1, no. 7 (1953): 11–17.

21. In his autobiography, Weegee confesses that the man and woman in this photo were models he hired from the Art Students' League; see *Weegee by Weegee*, 118.

22. Weegee, "Movies Are Better than Ever," 11.

23. Epstein, "Magnification," 240.

24. See Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Amelie Hastie, "Eating in the Dark: A Theoretical Concession," *Journal of Visual Culture* 6, no. 2 (2007): 283–302; Jennifer Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); and Caetlin Benson-Allott, *The Stuff of*

Spectatorship: Material Cultures of Film and Television (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021).

25. Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night*, 206, 221. Schivelbusch himself made this claim about theater, but stopped short of applying it to cinema.

26. Barthes, "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," 1; translation modified.

27. Eugène Minkowski, *Lived Time: Phenomenological and Psychopathological Studies*, trans. Nancy Metzel (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 405.

28. Barthes, "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," 2.

29. Ibid., 1.

30. Ibid., 2.

31. Weegee, *Naked City* (1945; New York: Da Capo Press, 1975), 19.

32. In *Weegee by Weegee*, the photographer describes his firsthand experiences of sleeping rough: "I was broke, hungry, and had no place to sleep. It was impossible to find work. I slept in the parks, in missions, and anywhere else where I could find a place to lie down" (20). Discussing the photograph of the children on the fire escape, he says, "Later, people seeing these pictures in the Museum of Modern Art would wonder how I knew about such things. How did I know about them? Hell! That's the way I had slept" (95).

33. Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 84–85.

34. John David Rhodes, *The Spectacle of Property: The House in American Film* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 13.

35. Samuel R. Delany, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 90.

36. Ibid., 58. After the closure of the theater, Delany describes seeing this man on the street outside, "eyes squinting in his wrinkled face, as though the wan Eighth Avenue sun was simply and permanently too bright."

37. *Weegee by Weegee*, 117.

38. Barthes, "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," 1; translation modified. Like Metz, he associates cinema with a sense of irresponsibility; there is a moral inflection to this laxity.

39. Roland Barthes, "En sortant du cinema," *Communications* 23 (1975): 104–7.

40. Barthes, "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," 3.

41. Ibid., 4.

42. Ibid., 3.

43. Ibid., 2.

44. Ibid., 4.

45. Ibid., 2, 4.

46. Victor Burgin, *The Remembered Film* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 31.

47. Barthes, "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," 3.

48. Metz, *Imaginary Signifier*, 138.

49. Burgin, *Remembered Film*, 29.

50. Barthes, "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," 4.

51. He argues that the critique of illusionism, insofar as it "conceives the total social process as a process of self-concealment," gives rise to "the endless reproduction of the process of falsification it denounced." See Rancière, *Emancipated Spectator*, 44–45.

52. See “Interview with Jacques Rancière,” in Philip Watts, *Roland Barthes’ Cinema* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 106.

10. ZONING OUT

1. Qingling Xie, *Flowers of Taipei: Taiwan New Cinema* (2014; Hong Kong: Anle Film, 2017), DVD.

2. This ritual benediction might be seen as a playful variation on Thailand’s convention of playing the royal anthem before every feature film screening, in the vein of his short film *The Anthem* (2006).

3. Jan Linschoten, “On Falling Asleep,” *Phenomenological Psychology*, ed. J. J. Kockelmans, Phaenomenological 103 (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 103.

4. Apichatpong Weerasethakul on *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*, International Film Festival Rotterdam, January 24, 2018, https://iffr.com/en/blog/weerasethakul-on-sleep-cinemahotel.

5. Pavle Levi, *Cinema by Other Means* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), xiv.

6. Carrion-Murayari, “Interview with Apichatpong Weerasethakul,” 14.

7. Apichatpong Weerasethakul, “I Escape into the Movies,” TateShots (London: Tate, 2016), www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdAigXMS7kI.

8. Antoine de Baecque and Jean-Marc Lalanne, “Eloge des stupéfiants: Entretien avec Hou Hsiao-hsien,” *Cahiers du Cinéma* 529 (November 1998): 38.

9. Linschoten, “On Falling Asleep,” 99.

10. On the Taiwan Trilogy, see Ma, *Melancholy Drift*.

11. Römers, “Creating His Own Cinematic Language,” 45.

12. Flanagan, “Towards an Aesthetic of Slow in Contemporary Cinema.”

13. Crary, *24/7*, 52–53, 10, 53.

14. De Luca, “Slow Time, Visible Cinema,” 37.

15. Crary, *24/7*, 126.

16. De Luca, “Slow Time, Visible Cinema,” 41.

17. Flanagan, “Towards an Aesthetic of Slow in Contemporary Cinema.”

18. Abbas Kiarostami, cited in Justin Remes, “The Sleeping Spectator: Nonhuman Aesthetics in Abbas Kiarostami’s *Five: Dedicated to Ozu*,” in *Slow Cinema*, ed. Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 235. On Kiarostami and sleep, see also Xueli Wang, “Sleeping through Kiarostami,” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, October 7, 2016, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/sleeping-through-kiarostami/.

19. Remes, “Sleeping Spectator,” 235.

20. Flanagan, “Towards an Aesthetic of Slow in Contemporary Cinema.”

21. James Quandt, “Exquisite Corpus: The Films of Apichatpong Weerasethakul,” *Artforum* 43, no. 9 (May 2005): 226.

22. Henderson, “Apichatpong Weerasethakul at GSFF.”

23. Félix Mesguich cited in Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 31.

24. “Apichatpong Weerasethakul on *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*,” The Film Comment Podcast, February 1, 2018.

25. Apichatpong, *Apichatpong Weerasethakul Sourcebook*, 39.

26. André Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," in *What Is Cinema?*, vol. 1, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 33; cited in Flanagan, "Towards an Aesthetic of Slow in Contemporary Cinema."

27. Bazin, "Evolution of the Language of Cinema," 34, 35.

28. Ibid., 36.

29. André Bazin, "William Wyler, or the Jansenist of Directing," in *Bazin at Work: Major Essays & Reviews from the Forties & Fifties*, ed. Bert Cardullo (New York: Routledge, 1997), 8.

30. Cited in Bazin, "William Wyler, or the Jansenist of Directing," 9.

31. Karl Schoonover, "Wastrels of Time: Slow Cinema's Laboring Body, the Political Spectator, and the Queer," *Framework* 53, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 66, my emphasis.

32. Ibid., 67.

33. Tina Kendall, "Staying on, or Getting Off (the Bus): Approaching Speed in Cinema and Media Studies," *Cinema Journal* 55, no. 2 (Winter 2016): 112–18; Karen Beckman [Redrobe], "The Tortoise, the Hare, and the Constitutive Outsiders: Reframing Fast and Slow Cinemas," *Cinema Journal* 55, no. 2 (Winter 2016): 125–30.

34. Beckman [Redrobe], "Tortoise, the Hare, and the Constitutive Outsiders," 125; Kendall, "Staying on, or Getting Off (the Bus)," 116.

35. Benedikt Köhler, Sabria David, and Jörg Blumtritt, "The Slow Media Manifesto," January 2, 2010, http://en.slow-media.net/manifesto.

36. For Benjamin, the urgency of tackling the historical transformations of experience demanded an interrogation of the prevailing view of distraction as unthinking passivity and contemplation as active intellection, yet this very opposition is retrenched in contemporary discourses of sleep and slowness.

37. Claire Bishop, "Black Box, White Cube, Gray Zone: Dance Exhibitions and Audience Attention," *TDR: The Drama Review* 62, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 39.

38. Barthes, "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," 3.

39. André Bazin, "The Grandeur of Limelight," in *What Is Cinema?*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 132.

40. Alexander Kluge, "The Assault of the Present on the Rest of Time," trans. Tamara Evans and Stuart Liebman, *New German Critique* 49 (Winter 1990): 16.

41. Radical Film Network of Scotland, "Lucid Dreamer," March 13, 2018, https://rfnscotland.com/2018/03/13/lucid-dreamer/.

42. Jonathan Thomas, interview, "Alexander Kluge," *The Third Rail* 10, October 2016, http://thirdrailquarterly.org/alexander-kluge/. For Kluge, the idea of the film in the viewer's head is tied to the understanding of cinema in terms of a relation of production between the author and the spectator. Cinema's place in the public sphere stems from this relation. See Kluge, "On Film and the Public Sphere," trans. Thomas Y. Levin and Miriam B. Hansen, *New German Critique* 24–25 (Autumn 1981–Winter 1982): 207.

43. Paige Lim, "The Science of Snooze," *Bangkok Post*, March 1, 2018, www.bangkokpost.com/lifestyle/social-and-lifestyle/1420343/the-science-of-snooze.

44. Burgin, *Remembered Film*, 17.

45. Ibid., 110.

46. Ibid., 29. Burgin extracts this phrase from Alain Bergala's definition of sleepy lassitude in *Spécial Godard: Trente ans depuis* (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 1991), 114.

47. Akrami, "Interview."

48. Ruiz, *Poetics of Cinema I*, 117.

49. Ibid., 118.

50. Ibid., 119.

51. Barthes, "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," 3.

52. Ruiz, *Poetics of Cinema I*, 119.

53. Ibid., 119.

54. Ibid., 118.

55. Rancière, *Emancipated Spectator*, 17.

56. Jean Cocteau, *The Art of Cinema*, trans. Robin Buss (New York: Marion Boyars, 1992), 126.

57. Rancière, *Emancipated Spectator*, 14. The drowsy spectator, like Rancière's emancipated spectator, sees in their own way and in so doing engages in a more far-reaching "refashioning" of the work, now conceived as an aggregate of elements available to be "composed" anew in every instance, within a process that assumes "no direct path" between an author's "intentions" and a spectator's "outcome" (13, 82).

58. Apichatpong, *Apichatpong Weerasethakul Sourcebook*, 70.

59. May Adadol Ingawanij, "Itinerant Cinematic Practices in and around Thailand during the Cold War," *Southeast of Now* 2, no. 1 (March 2018): 34, 36.

60. Ingawanij, "Animism," 91.

11. CIRCADIAN CINEMAS

1. Breton, "As in a Wood," 73.

2. Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, 84.

3. Epstein, "Magnification," 239–40.

4. Burgin, *Remembered Film*, 43.

5. Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, 105.

6. The sense of ending is overdetermined by *24 Frames*'s status as Kiarostami's final film, completed and released after his death in 2016.

7. Ottessa Moshfegh, *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (New York: Penguin Press, 2018).

8. For instance, see Julian Hanich, *The Audience Effect: On the Collective Cinema Experience* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).

9. Erika Balsom, "Screening Rooms: The Movie Theatre in/and the Gallery," *Public: Art/Culture/Ideas* 40 (Fall 2009): 27.

10. Koepnick, *Long Take*, 59, 28.

11. Casetti, *Lumière Galaxy*, 196.

12. See Alison Griffiths, *Shivers Down Your Spine: Cinema, Museums, and the Immersive View* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), and *Carceral Fantasies: Cinema and Prison in Early Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); Haidee Wasson and Charles W. Acland, eds., *Useful Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Ingawanij, "Itinerant Cinematic Practices"; Allyson Nadia Field and Marsha Gordon, eds., *Screening Race in American Nontheatrical Film* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019); Jie Li, "The Hot Noise of Open-Air Cinema," *Grey Room* 81 (Fall 2020): 6–35; and Chenshu Zhou, *Cinema Off Screen: Moviegoing in Socialist China* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021).

13. Ingawanij, "Itinerant Cinematic Practices," 14, 36.

14. Ibid., 18.

15. Wasson and Acland, *Useful Cinema*, 1.

16. Casetti, *Lumière Galaxy*, 10.

17. Casetti writes, "Today the tension between persistence and transformation seems to be reaching its high point and thus takes on a particularly meaningful—and even dramatic—character" (*Lumière Galaxy*, 4).

18. Ibid., 198.

19. Ibid., 5, 19–20.

20. Balsom, "Screening Rooms," 27.

21. Casetti, *Lumière Galaxy*, 87.

22. Ibid., 185–86.

23. Ibid., 81.

24. Lin Min-lee and Tsai Ming-liang, *Stray Dogs at the Museum: Tsai Ming-liang Solo Exhibition* (Taipei: Museum of National Taipei University of Education, 2016), 234–35.

25. Fowler, "Room for Experiment"; Raymond Bellour, "Of an Other Cinema," in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, ed. Tanya Leighton (London: Tate Publishing and Afterall Books, 2008), 406–22; Balsom, "Screening Rooms," 26.

26. For a discussion of Tsai's work with museums, see Beth Tsai, "The Many Faces of Tsai Ming-liang: Cinephilia, the French Connection, and Cinema in the Gallery," *International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies* 13, no. 2 (2017): 141–60; and Elena Pollachi, "Porous Circuits: Tsai Ming-liang, Zhao Liang, and Wang Bing at the Venice International Film Festival and the Interplay between the Festival and the Art Exhibition Circuits," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 13, no. 2 (2019): 130–46.

27. Noah Buchan, "Film's Death and Resurrection," *Taipei Times*, March 25, 2010.

28. Francesco Casetti, "The Relocation of Cinema," *Necsus*, November 12, 2012, https://necsus-ejms.org/the-relocation-of-cinema/.

29. Ji-Hoon Kim, "Learning About Time: An Interview with Apichatpong Weerasethakul," *Film Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (Summer 2011): 52.

30. Gridthiya Gaweewong, "From the Forest to the Bangkok Streets," *ARTiT*, August 8, 2010, www.art-it.asia/en/u/admin_ed_itv_e/IAoDZ5obqPCeSsOjlXJ4.

31. Erika Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 14.

32. Pamela M. Lee, "Lying in the Gallery," *October* 176 (Spring 2021): 53–72.

33. Ibid., 68.

34. Ibid., 62. Lee writes, "That horizontality might be extracted as a *resource*—something expedient and commoditized, like gold or oil or *information*—dovetails with the thesis of Crary's polemic *24/7*."

35. Balsom points out, "Cinematic spectatorship functions as a kind of straw man against which the inherent critical value of gallery spectatorship is asserted" (*Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, 50). Such arguments simplistically rehash the most extreme claims of apparatus theory while also reinvesting the exit from the theater with the pedagogical mission of rousing the spectator from their constitutive passivity and ideological conformity.

36. On the comparison between the viewer, the window shopper, and the screen-based media user, see Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, ch. 1, and Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

37. De Luca, "Slow Time, Visible Cinema," 26.

38. Koepnick, *Long Take*, 138

39. Crary, *24/7*, 3.

40. Ingawanij, "Itinerant Cinematic Practices," 29, 25.

41. Carson, *Decreation*, 22.

42. Rebekah Rutkoff, *The Irresponsible Magician: Essays and Fictions* (South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 2015), 93. For an account of the Temenos, see also Erika Balsom, *After Uniqueness: A History of Film and Video Art in Circulation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), ch. 7.

43. Schechner, "Selective Inattention," 15. Schechner points out that selectively inattentive audiences are often even more invested and committed to the performance.

44. Ruth Hirschman, "Pop Goes the Artist," in Goldsmith, *I'll Be Your Mirror*, 41, 44.

45. David James, ed., *To Free the Cinema: Jonas Mekas and the New York Underground* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 170.

46. Gretchen Berg, "Andy Warhol: My True Story," in Goldsmith, *I'll Be Your Mirror*, 92.

47. Justin Remes, *Motion[less] Pictures: The Cinema of Stasis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 37–38. Remes refers to *Sleep* and *Empire* as "furniture films," or "works that open up new ways of thinking about cinematic reception by inviting a series of distracted glances rather than a focused and comprehensive gaze" (34). Koepnick similarly argues that Warhol's aim was "to define film as event and thereby stress the performative and post-representational qualities of spectatorship" (*Long Take*, 35).

48. Stephen Koch, *Stargazer: Andy Warhol's World and His Films* (New York: Praeger, 1973), 39.

49. See Jonas Mekas, *Movie Journal: The Rise of the New American Cinema, 1959–1971* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 146–47.

50. He writes, "A crowd of thirty or forty people stormed out of the theater into the lobby, surrounded the box office, Bob Brown, and myself, and threatened to beat us up and destroy the theater unless their money was returned." Jonas Mekas, cited in Remes, *Motion[less] Pictures*, 39.

51. www.on-curating.org/issue-21-reader/both-a-radical-and-mild-change.html. The Tate Modern organized a sleepover screening of *Sleep* in 2007. The film was projected on a continuous loop throughout the night inside its vast Turbine Hall, with the audience camped out on the floor.

52. See Jocelyn Szczepaniak-Gillece, "Smoke and Mirrors: Cigarettes, Cinephilia, and Reverie in the American Movie Theater," *Film History* 28, no. 3 (2016): 106.

53. Juan Llamas Rodriguez, "A Global Cinematic Experience: Cinépolis, Film Exhibition, and Luxury Branding," *Journal for Cinema and Media Studies* 58, no. 3 (Spring 2019): 66. Rodriguez's analysis focuses on the exhibition strategies of the Cinépolis chain, which sells "pods of comfort" as a cosmopolitan VIP experience.

54. In a 2018 keynote, Jung Seo, the CEO of CJ CGV, stakes the future of the multiplex on the understanding that it cannot only be a place for watching movies. Instead, he says, "the value of CGV is to provide our customers the most attractive 'place' in which to have a communal social experience." See "CJ CGV CEO Lays Out Cultureplex Concept as Key to Growth of Cinema Business," *Celluloid Junkie*, https://celluloidjunkie.com/wire/cj-cgv-ceo-lays-out-cultureplex-concept-as-key-to-growth-of-cinema-business/, accessed October 13, 2020.

55. Schechner, "Selective Inattention," 16.

56. For instance, see Paolo Cherchi Usai, *The Death of Cinema: History, Cultural Memory, and the Digital Dark Age* (London: British Film Institute, 2001), 103 and passim; and Casetti, *Lumière Galaxy*, 185–86.

57. Schechner, "Selective Inattention," 15.

58. Rancière, *Emancipated Spectator*, 17.

59. Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, 71.

60. Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, 3; and Kara Swisher, "Sorry, We Aren't Going Back to the Movies," *New York Times*, July 10, 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/07/10/opinion/sunday/hbo-max-streaming-covid-diesel.html.

61. Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, 14.

62. Casetti, *Lumière Galaxy*, 198.

63. Jasmine Nadua Trice, *City of Screens: Imagining Audiences in Manila's Alternative Film Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 22. Trice develops the idea of cinema's speculative public in describing the alternative film culture that arose in Manila in the aftermath of the Philippines' financial crisis. Without denying the regional-historical specificity of her concept, I want to suggest its broader applicability to cinema in the present moment.

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